JULY

61

Polyhedron

NEWSZINE

RPGA NETWORK

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Classifieds

Mexico: Atencion Ciudad de Mexico, soy el lider de un grupo de jugado res del AD&D® game y estamos en busca de mas miembros. Para mayor informacion escriban a: THE DRAGON KNIGHTS, Aljibe 103, Santa Ursula Xitla, CP 14420, MEXICO DF.0 llamen al 573-23-83 con Sergio.

Scotland: I'm 24 years old and looking for other gamers in southwest Scotland. I play the AD&D game and the GAMMA WORLD® game. Write: Bob Brown, 45 Wilson Street, Ayr, Ayrshire, Scotland KA8 9LT or call 0292-282957.

South America: Are there any other role players in Central or South America? I play the AD&D game, GAMMA WORLD game, D&D® game, BOOT HILL® game, and CyberPunk. I'd like to learn new games and meet new friends. Se hablo espanol. Please write: J. Cooper Cazedessus, Aptdo. No. 87-4001, Rio Segundo-Alajuela, Costa Rica-America Central.

Arizona: To arms! Heroes, to arms! The evil horde is afield! Commanders and units are needed now! Heroes of great might report to "R.H." at P.O. Box 1051, Ehrenberg, AZ 85334. I'm running campaigns with the BATTLESYSTEM™ rules (you don't need a copy) on several different worlds. To arms! To arms!

California: Looking for gamers in the San Francisco Bay area. I'm a 17-year-old GM/player. I enjoy the original AD&D game, Oriental Adventures, MERP, the STAR FRONTIERS™ game, Warhammer, Star Trek, Doctor Who, DC Heroes, MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, and Champions. I'd like someone to teach me Paranoia and Space 1889. Contact: Jeremiah Cook, 2016 San Antonio, Alameda, CA 94509, 415-522-4214 (after 4 p.m.).

Maine: I'm a veteran player/DM looking for a group in the South Paris area. I play many different games, including both editions of the AD&D game, Hero System games, Shadowrun, and Runequest. I have played and GMed for years, but prefer playing. I am willing to start a new group. Contact: Russell Carter, 516 Old County Rd., Bryant Pond, ME 04219.

Massachusetts: I am a 15-year-old player looking for a gaming group and DM in the Worcester area. I prefer the AD&D game, but I also know the D&D game and Shadowrun. Please call 508-798-0535 or write: David Starobin, 11 Hickory Drive, Worcester, MA 01609.

Michigan: Fairly experienced game master seeks players. My group meets every other weekend. We play the AD&D game and occasionally Call of Cthulhu. Please call Mike Seaton at 313-285-5452, weekdays after 4 p.m. Don't hesitate; all ages acceptable.

Michigan: I'm a serious, 17-year-old GM/player looking for gamers in the Genesee County area. I'm interested in the AD&D 2nd Edition game, Battletech, Shadowrun, D&D game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. I would like to learn other games. Please contact: David C. Kubanek Jr., 7502 W. Coldwater Rd., Flushing, MI 48433, 313-659-1217.

Oklahoma: Looking for Network action? Contact the Players' Guild of Central Oklahoma. We run sanctioned events at major conventions across the state, and we meet every Saturday for games. In the Oklahoma City metro area call: Donald G. Dennis 405-751-1795. In Shawnee call: Ronnie Jacobs 405-275-6148. Or write Players' Guild, P.O. Box 770396, Oklahoma City, OK 73177.

Washington: I'm 22 years old and looking for other gamers to start a club or to join an established club in Kitsap County. Contact: Pete Steinmetz, 1307 NW Mirage Ln. #G-203, Silverdale, WA 98383; 206-692-5884.

Wisconsin: I'm a 15-year-old player/GM looking for a gaming group in the Delavan area. I play the AD&D game, Battletech, and Car Wars. I am willing to learn others, especially Shadowrun and Call of Cthulhu. I'm also willing to hear from a pen pal or two. Write: Andy Vance, 313 South 3rd Street, Delavan, WI 53115, or call 414-728-6671 after 4 p.m. weekdays.

General: I am a 14-year-old from New York. I play adventure games such as Wizardry and the Ultima series on my IBM. I am just starting out with role-playing games and would like pen pals, especially from overseas, to give me tips on playing the games and advice on what to buy. My other interests include drawing, photography, music, model cars and airplanes, soccer, football, and weightlifting. All letters will be answered. Please write: Scot McNulty, 48 Bently Avenue, Malone, NY 12953, USA.

General: Wanted by collector: DUNGEON® Magazine #3, Netherworld Continuum #1-2, Olympus #1-4, POLYHEDRON™ Newszine # 31, and White Wolf #1. Write: Bill Jaffe, P.O. Box 2645, Fairfax, VA 22031. I also buy collections.

General: I'm a 17-year-old male gamer seeking pen pals interested in the D&D game or AD&D game. I enjoy fantasy, science fiction, reading and writing, and computers. Also, I'm looking for gamers in the Ottawa, Ontario area who would like to form a group. Please write: Chris Marker, RR #1, Lombardy, Ontario, Canada K0G 1L0.

General: Wanted: The Triangle, a Star Trek role-playing game supplement. Contact: Dave Rickett, P.O. Box 73, Waukesha, WI 53187-0073.

General: Wanted: The Indiana Jones role-playing game. I am very desperate. Please contact: John Furmanski, RD 1 Box 307A Acee Road, Whitesboro, NY 13492.

General: Wanted: Out-of-print adventures for the AD&D game. Also looking for copies of WG7 Castle Greyhawk (TSR9222). Write: David Johannes, ERAU Box 8217, Prescott, AZ 86301.

General: Twenty-year-old gamer seeks pen pals. I am interested in the AD&D game and Rolemaster. All letters will be answered. Write: Brian Potts, 5211-45th Close, Innisfail, Alberta, Canada T0M 1A0.

General: Twenty-one-year-old male gamer wishes to join a PBM game. I also buy, trade, sell comics, and sell games for the Commodore 64 and Amiga 500. Contact: Robert A. Tomaszewski Jr. PCS Box 3283, Edwards AFB, CA 93524-5361, 805-258-0957.

About the Cover

Do sentient ships dream? Perhaps they do. If so, they might see visions like this unearthly scene by Jeff Easley.

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Polyhedron™ NEWSZINE

Volume 12, Number 5
Issue #61, July, 1991

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Notes From HQ

Letters, Winners, and the Game Fair

It's mid March as I write this, and responses to our call in issue 58 for commentary on the Newszine are just beginning to trickle in. We've printed some of these in our *Letters* column this issue, and we hope to receive many more responses. Don't forget your chance to let the staff know what *you* like and dislike about the Newszine.

If you think March is a tad early to be working on an editorial that won't see print until July, you haven't heard *nuthin* yet. Jean and I started editing this issue's contents two weeks ago, at the end of February. We chose most of this issue's articles in a day-long meeting back in October, drawing on submissions that were as much as eight months old *then*. Think that's getting things ready in plenty of time? The Newszine's budget, typesetting schedule, and printing schedule was in place even before that. Why am I telling you this? Because we're in the midst of a long visit from the missed deadline monster, especially for convention announcements and tournament requests.

We're not kidding when we say we need six months advance notice for these things. Of course, it doesn't take us six months to process a convention announcement or tournament request, but we do work many weeks in advance.

A lot of people are surprised by how far in advance we work, and they wonder out loud if it's really necessary. It is. When planning Newszines, for example, we have to coordinate our editorial efforts with work from artists, typesetters, keyliners, printers, and the post office. At each step we have to build in a little extra time to allow for delays—the time adds up quickly.

Producing the Newszine is our most important single task, and it gets an appropriate share of our time. All the other work we do must be scheduled to fit between our Newszine deadlines. That's why it's vital that you respect our deadlines. We're happy to serve the membership in any way we can, but we need your help. Please turn in your convention announcements early.

Beginner's Luck?

The final results of our 1991 membership drive are in. The competition ran from October, 1990 to March, 1991 and was open to registered Network clubs.

The champion recruiter was the Role Players Guild of Kansas City (MO), one of our newest clubs. Congratulations, folks, you defeated many clubs which had longer histories and more members. The first prize is a trophy and piece of original Baton Lash artwork featuring Wolff and Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre, in action. In addition, the Role Players Guild of Kansas City receives a one-year extension to its club membership. Second place honors went to Travelers Unlimited of Feeding Hills, MA. The Travelers also get a one-year membership extension, plus a selection of autographed product from TSR, Inc. There was a tie for third place between The Circle of Swords (Butler, PA) and the Guild of the Dragon Masters (Junction City, CA). Both clubs get one-year membership extensions.

Serendipity

The HQ staff had no trouble awarding first prize for the membership drive, since member Alan Grimes, Role Players Guild of Kansas City president, happened to be in the office the day we tallied the results. Alan, a third-year medical student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, decided to spend an entire week of his vacation here at HQ helping out. We promised to keep him busy, and we did. Alan packed tournaments and gift certificates for spring and summer conventions, wrestled with our overloaded filing system, and put in a few hours banging a set of AD&D® game tournament characters into shape. Here's a bushel of thanks, Alan, for your double assist.

A New Face

Alan's (tor)mentor during his stay at HQ was Tim Beach, who arrived in early March to become our new editorial assistant. Tim's duties include helping produce the Newszine, editing tournaments, and handling convention mailings. Tim currently is engaged in filing and cataloging all our myriad tournament manuscripts. Of course, our need for new tournament material is as great as ever, so we're counting on the membership to keep new manuscripts flowing steadily across Tim's desk.

Meet Us at the Game Fair

By the time you read this, the Network's preparations for the GEN CON® Game Fair, the grandaddy of game conventions, should almost be complete. If you're interested in assisting us with set up, tournament scoring, or judging, we'd like to hear from you, even at this late date.

We're eagerly looking forward to this year's game fair. We'll have a record three dozen or so tournaments, plus seminars. Among the highlights: The AD&D® Game Open. Designed by award-winning tournament author Tom Prusa, this year's Open is a hair-raising space odyssey using the SPELLJAMMER™ adventure setting. You needn't know anything about the SPELLJAMMER rules to play this event, but you'll need plenty of wit and spunk to win. This year's Open is staffed by member Darryl Behling and Damage, Inc., a Network club from West Allis, WI.

If you're arriving at the convention early, don't miss our annual members' meeting at the Hyatt on Wednesday night, August 7th; we've moved to larger quarters after overflowing our room last year. The agenda will include the second annual decathlon skit competition, where Network clubs strut their stuff to impress the judges and entertain their fellow members. Where else can you find singing barbarians, rhyming dice, and characters who are smarter than their players?

Good Gaming,

Skip

❑

Letters

The Newszine, Clubs, and a Thank You

More Input!

Months ago, I received only perfunctory notice that you had received an article of mine. You did not say if you intended to publish the piece. Now I have an opportunity to sell it, and I would like to withdraw the article.

Issue 58 asked readers for comments about the Newszine's contents. I don't like: *Wolff & Byrd.* It's funny, but it's not about gaming and I think people seeing the magazine for the first time would wonder if gamers take an unhealthy interest in the macabre. *Into the Dark.* Movie reviews aren't so useful to gamers, although I admit "The Evil Dead II" was a fantastic movie, especially for Call of Cthulhu fans. *The Everwinking Eye.* I just don't like it.

I really had fun with Rob Nicholls' logic puzzle in *The Living City.* The *Living Galaxy* is particularly good for ideas for SF gaming. Wes Nicholson's *Gaming Down Under* piqued my interest, but left me hungry for details about New Zealand's parliamentary inquiry into gaming.

Pierre Savoie
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

We always need more Newszine submissions, even if it takes some time to — up to a few months—to respond to authors. We usually send out three or four batches of author responses each year. We know it's hard to wait for a reply after you've worked hard on an article, but waiting comes with the writing territory. We've returned your article—we hope you complete the sale.

Generally, we don't care for work that has been simultaneously submitted to other publications. We usually have three or four issues of the Newszine in the pipeline at any given time (that's why we've got to have six months' notice for Convention Announcements and Classifieds), and there's a chance that a piece submitted to another publication would be double published and create a legal mess.

We'd like to know more about what's going on in New Zealand, too. However, Wes hasn't been able to gather any details. If any member can shed some light on this, we'd like to see your information.

Thanks for your input on what you like and don't like about the Newszine. We'd like to get more responses from the membership. We make content changes based on what our readers want.

Here's my response to *Notes From HQ* in issue 58.

First, Ed Greenwood's *Everwinking Eye* is the best part of the Newszine. His "low fantasy" approach and the level of detail he provides neatly fits my campaign style. I also admire his obvious knowledge of medieval life and the way he adds magical powers as a common, yet mysterious, part of society. Has this guy published any novels?

Second, I looked at the official club list and was amazed to find that southern California, one of the nation's most populous areas, doesn't have *one* club. I'm also amazed at the lack of conventions in the Los Angeles area. I've seen only one in the year and a half that I've been a Network member. Is there anything you or your regional director can do to get things moving?

Third, many of the Newszine's features seem to be written by the same people over and over, every issue. Surely there are other members who have publishable material to contribute.

Is that enough? I appreciate your call for comments, after all, the Newszine is for all members.

Dan Day
Rancho Cucamonga, CA

Well, Dan and Pierre, Ed has given us quite a large supply of Everwinking Eye *material, and we'll probably publish all of it. If the "pro" commentary continues to be as thoughtful and detailed as yours, Dan,* Everwinking Eye's *future is assured.*

Yes, Ed Greenwood has written a novel. Its title is Spellfire *and you should be able to get a copy from your local bookstore.*

As it happens, we have several members working very hard to get the Network running full steam in California

Continued on the next page

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and the rest of the West. Check the next letter for details.

Looking at the contents pages for the most recent six issues, we see only two bylines repeated—if you don't count columnists and staff members. That's not so bad. We do have several authors who keep us supplied with a steady stream of material, and since we look at quality first and name second, some authors are getting published more than others. However, our new monthly publication schedule should let us keep publishing good material from our veteran writers and still leave plenty of space for talented newcomers.

Greetings from the West Coast

When I first volunteered to coordinate Network activities out here I found there wasn't much to do. In fact, there wasn't *anything* to do. Since then, a few stalwart volunteers and I have organized events in Arizona and both ends of California. We still are trying to contact conventions in Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, but aren't having any success.

In Arizona, Dave Babbit has helped us make appearances at Lepricon (April) and Coppercon (September). These two cons are located in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area. In 1991, these two cons will feature Network tournaments for the AD&D® game and five other game systems.

In Southern California, Anthony Renauldo has helped make the Network's presence felt at the long-established Los Angeles Orccon (February), Gamex (May), and Gateway (September). We also have run events this past June at Polycon in San Luis Obispo, and we hope to break new ground at the San Diego Comicon this month. Since October, 1990, we have been running Network events in Palmdale (The Wizard's Workshop), the San Fernando Valley (The Zone), Glendale (The Game Keeper), and Cerritos (Alpha Omega Games). These game stores run one-or two-day mini conventions throughout the year. Members can get the stores' phone numbers and addresses out of the phone book.

In Northern California, Chris McGuigan has helped us make appearances at Dundracon (February), Gamescaucus (May) and Pacificon (September).

As I mentioned earlier, I haven't had much luck in Nevada, Washington, and Oregon. If any member knows about conventions in these states, please let me know about them. I'd be happy to contact them and offer the Network's assistance. However, it's always better if individual members contact a convention and let the organizers know that Network events would be appreciated. These people have to please *you* to stay in business, and they know it.

Also, if you attend any of the conventions I have listed and would like to volunteer some time behind the DM's screen please contact me. The hardest part of coordinating events is finding judges. We are just beginning to pull together a list of competent, dependable referees and we're *always* looking for more. Further, when we finally get started in a new area we have to start building a whole new list; very few of our fine, Southern California judges would be inclined to drive all the way to Oregon.

Next on my agenda is the topic of clubs. We on the west coast finally have a new word—club. By the time you read this there will be three new clubs formed with more following close behind. As I write this, the clubs haven't been named, but they are located in Phoenix, AZ; Palmdale, CA; and Garden Grove, CA. Other possible sites for clubs in California are Burlingame, Fullerton, Cerritos, and San Diego. Nevada might soon have a club in Las Vegas. There already are three clubs out here, but I can't get in touch with them. These clubs are: The Far Flung Gamers of San Jose, CA; Guild of the Dragon Masters of Junction City, CA; and ITL Gamers Guild of Milwaukie, OR. I think we need a few more clubs to keep them on their toes. I also would be most interested in hearing from members in Nevada and Washington concerning clubs.

Finally, I understand that many members value their privacy and don't wish to have their names and addresses given out. I respect personal privacy, so if you contact me to locate other members I send a letter with *your* name and address to every member in the area you want searched. This seems to be working well. However, I currently have two requests that don't have return addresses. Both these letters also have unreadable signatures. Please print your name and address somewhere on any correspondence you send me.

Gary Haynes
Regional Director
Placentia, CA

Thanks for the update Gary.

For those of you who missed the regional director listing in issue 58, Gary's address is 392 Hawaii Way, Placentia, CA 92670. If you decide to write him, please go one better than proving a complete return address — include an addressed return envelope or postcard with postage.

Making a Difference

Dear members of the RPGA™ Network:

Please accept my sincere thanks for your generous gift of $400 to Children's Hospital of Wisconsin at the Winter Fantasy convention.

You can take great pride in knowing your donation will fund patient care services in our rehabilitation program, which serves thousands of children each year. Your gift will make a difference in the lives of the youngsters we treat, whether they're struggling through extensive rehabilitation after life-threatening accidents, or simply receiving developmental evaluations.

I'm excited that your advisory committee has also chosen Children's Hospital as the beneficiary of proceeds from your benefit event at GEN CON® Game Fair. Based on the genuine interest in the information I shared at Winter Fantasy, and the wonderful grand prize, it sounds to me like the benefit event is a can't miss proposition.

Thank you again for your generous support of our special hospital. It is deeply appreciated.

Patrick V. Kessenich
Special Events Coordinator
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

The grand prize Patrick mentioned is a trip to European GEN CON game fair in November, 1991. To qualify, you must enter two Network events: the AD&D® game Feature tournament and the AD&D game benefit event. More details on this contest are given on the inside front cover of this Newszine and in DRAGON® Magazine #167. You can get a copy of the DRAGON Magazine article by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Network HQ. We hope every member who attends the game fair will support the benefit event—it is for a good cause. ❑

The New Rogues Gallery

A Quartet Of Winners

by John Patruno, Tony Newton, Chris Ryan, and Rod Harrison

The RPGA™ Network's Australian branch held a character design competition for the AD&D® 2nd Edition game. The winners are presented here.

Dee Jay

4th Level Male Human Bard

STR: 11
INT: 14
WIS: 10
DEX: 15
CON: 8
CHA: 18

AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 20
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common

Age: 30
Height: 6' 2"
Weight: 190
Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, long sword, long bow
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Musical instrument (lute) (15), singing (18), dancing (15), swimming (11), reading/writing (15)

Magic Items: *Long sword +2, stone of sampling*, ring of rhyming**
Spells/day: 2 1

Bard Skills

CW	DN	PP	RL
75	40	25	10

Traveling Spell Book

Level One

Hypnotism
Jump
Friends
Unseen Servant

Level Two

Magic Mouth
Web
Scare
Wizard Lock

* New magic item, detailed at the end of this column

Illustration by James Holloway

Dee Jay is a tall, lanky man with earth-brown skin and well groomed hair that he puts in a long, single braid down his back. His big brown eyes are a perfect match to his brilliant friendly smile. Dee takes great pride in his appearance, and he always wears red padded leather armor with a red leather head band.

His bard career began at the age of 18 when he found he could make a living roaming from town to town singing of heroes bold and brave, and the beauty of the world. After two years, Dee was approached by a party of adventurers who had been listening to his ballads and asked if he would join them. He readily agreed, certain it would give him new material. It did, but much of it was unattractive and unpoetic. During the group's adventures he saw the uglier side of life: oppression, slavery, poverty, suffering. Four years of this was more than enough for Dee, who left the group to embark on a crusade close to his heart.

Since that day six years ago he has done his best to use his songs to inform people of the injustices in the world, and to try and get them to change. Unfortunately, he was not very successful. Despite his lute solos and songs, few people *really* listened to his message.

While performing in a tavern in a small rural town, Dee met Matus Muzak, a wizard of some renown. Muzak was impressed by the young bard and took him under his wing for months of intensive training. During that time Dee learned spells that could help get his message across. Muzak also gave Dee a *ring of rhyming* and a *stone of sampling* to assist him in his work. There were many other things the proud wizard showed him, such as a type of tree bark that when rubbed together had a hypnotic effect Muzak called "rapping."

Since leaving Muzak, Dee has had much more success in his roaming and message spreading. People now listen to Dee, and he has achieved an almost cult status among the youth of the areas he frequents. The fact that people started to listen to him, and his effect on youngsters, has worried more than one corrupt official. Dee has spent more than a few nights in jail, and has been run out of several towns. He has not been successfully prosecuted and is still traveling the countryside spreading his message.

Dee will always accompany any party of adventurers whose current task is the crushing of tyranny.

Varin

7th Level Male Half Elven Jester (thief/wizard variant)

STR: 15
INT: 18
WIS: 17
DEX: 19
CON: 15
CHA: 17

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 36
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Dryad, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Minotaur, Orcish, Bronze Dragon, Cloud Dragon

Age: 38 (appears 19)
Height: 5' 6"
Weight: 146
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Blue
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, long bow, dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Gaming (17), tightrope walking (19)
Special Abilities: Immune to insanity, *ventriloquism* at will

Magic Items: *Tome of Ethnic Humor, magical paddleboard +4, extendable hand of enjoyment, blowgun of wild emotions* (all from DRAGON® Magazine #134), *robe of useful items, potion of extra healing, decanter of endless water, robe of holding**
Spells/day: 4 3 2 1

Jester (Thief) Skills

PP	CW	Catch Hurled Items
50	87	87

Traveling Spell Books

Level One

Hypnotism
Sleep
Animal Friendship
Friends
Charm Person
Jump

Level Two

Glitterdust
Web
Scare
Ray of Enfeeblement

Level Three

Hold Person
Gust of Wind
Charm Monster
Slow

* New magic item, detailed at the end of this column

Varin is lucky he is alive. Born with a disease which none in his village could cure, the fortunate toddler accidentally spilled a large jug of an alchemical mixture over (and into) himself. After this he discovered the brew somehow lessened his affliction. Varin's parents subsequently force-fed their babe with the mixture, curing him of his ailment and affecting a few most unusual changes. Because the alchemical creation had some spell components in it, repeated imbibing of it granted Varin a *ventriloquism* ability at will.

Initially quite shy, the intelligent and inquisitive little Varin, who spent much of his time around the bazaars, encountered some rather unusual people. This gave him a broad and colorful sense of humor. It is here he learned a few questionable skills, such as picking pockets and climbing walls.

As he grew older, he became fascinated by magic and its sciences, and he enrolled in a Magicians College, doing rather well because the brew he had imbibed as a child and youth made him very receptive to magic. During one class experiment involving *fireballs,* the teacher miscast the spell and incinerated himself, scorched most of the students, and set the building afire. By chance, Varin was late for that class and escaped uninjured. Upon reflection, Varin laughed at this apparent good fortune as he had originally intended to be early and assist the teacher with the experiment. Had he been there, he, too, would have died and so came to the conclusion (while entertaining injured friends) that life is short and he should make the most of his.

After a few years, Varin graduated from his college, intending to continue his studies in more detail. However, all that flew out the window when a High Jester arrived in town. Varin was captivated by this master of wit and wizardry and thus became a jester's apprentice. He passed all his exams with flying colors in record time, then struck out on his own to earn his own way, advancing through the jester-ranks.

His main hobbies include listening to the storytellers in the market, appreciating good music, and nature watching in peaceful glens.

Recently, Varin has been accepted by a band of adventurers after a nasty incident at a foreign court; a badly misplaced joke nearly cost Varin his head! He escaped and now travels the land with a collection of pets and his new found friends in search of adventure. If (when) he gets back alive, he's hoping to buy a modest house in the country and maybe settle down with a local girl who he has been admiring. Though for all his wit and "finesse," he has not yet had the courage to ask her out. His new friends are secretly plotting to rectify this.

Maylin of Waving Grain

Male Human Bard/Thief/Wizard 5/6/9

STR: 12
INT: 18
WIS: 7
DEX: 18
CON: 11
CHA: 17

AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 31
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish

Age: 40
Height: 6' 1"
Weight: 183
Hair/Eyes: Black/Brown
Weapon Proficiencies: Two-handed sword, long bow, battle axe, long sword, dagger, short sword, quarter staff, darts
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Musical instrument (lute, flute, lyre) (17), blindfighting, gaming (15), ventriloquism (16), juggling (17), spellcraft (16), reading/writing (Common and Elvish) (19), appraising (18), bowyer/fletcher (17), dancing (18), herbalism (16)

Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 4, dagger +1, long bow +2, wand of mineral detection, ring of invisibility, potion of growth,* four *potions of healing, potion of extra healing, potion of sweet water, scroll with remove curse, jump, web, dispel magic,* and *tongues*
Spells/day: 7 4 3 2 1

Thieving Skills

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
30	55	75	65	60	60	70	85

Traveling Spell Book

Level One

Affect Normal Fires
Chill Touch
Detect Magic
Find Familiar
Jump
Read Magic
Charm Person
Shield
Comprehend Languages
Identify
Feather Fall
Magic Missile

Level Two

Continual Light	*ESP*
Web	*Wizard Lock*
Detect Evil	*Spectral Hand*
Knock	*Mirror Image*

Level Three

Dispel Magic	*Fireball*
Lightning Bolt	*Vampiric Touch*
Protection from Normal Missiles	*Tongues*

Level Four

Polymorph Self	*Wizard Eye*
Remove Curse	*Fire Charm*

Level Five

Teleport	*Telekinesis*

Familiar, Minas, black cat: Int Average; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-2; SA Rear claws 1-2 each.

Maylin's jet black hair and piercing eyes, coupled with his rich, dark clothing give him an almost sinister appearance.

Maylin started adventuring at a very young age, wanting to see more of the world. A bard stuck in Maylin's community for the winter taught Maylin several musical skills, putting the young human on the path toward his own bardic career. Wanting to try out his new abilities, he gathered a group of friends and began exploring the wilderness many miles from his home. On one jaunt they investigated a house rumored to be haunted. It was indeed populated with undead creatures. The house was purged of the undead—after a fierce battle in which Maylin and a few others were severely wounded. Since this time, Maylin has been cautious about any adventuring jobs involved with undead.

Maylin decided to become a thief when he got booted out of the Bard's College for some practical joke. It seems the Dean of the College did not like sheep in his bedroom. The Thieves' Guild was willing to accept him as a member while he kept a low profile to avoid the wrath of the Dean.

But thievery—plus his bard skills—were not enough. Maylin wanted still more power, more abilities. He sought out a wizard and became an apprentice, rising quickly through the ranks because of his thirst for the arcane.

During all these years Maylin stayed in contact with his first adventuring group, coaxing them out on various missions from time to time. They became well known for their exploits in disrupting the slave trade between various evil kingdoms in the realm.

Maylin's current plans include the complete overthrow of the slave trade, plus setting up a residence in the Wizard's Guild to study and construct some magic items. He will not be giving up adventuring, and he could be persuaded to join another group of adventurers—if an offer is tempting enough.

In combat, Maylin prefers to use his long bow and spells when possible as this keeps him out of melee, something he finds unsuitable and dangerous.

Diamen

7th Level Male Human Fighter (Knight)

STR: 17
INT: 10
WIS: 9
DEX: 18
CON: 16
CHA: 16

AC Normal: -2
AC Rear: 2
Hit Points: 48
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Languages: Common

Age: 30
Height: 6′ 8″
Weight: 280
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Green
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, long bow, bastard sword, broad sword, lance, cutlass
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Cooking (10), hunting (8), fishing (8), survival (10), riding, land-based (12)

Magic Items: *Long sword +1, plate mail +1*

As a young lad, Diamen worked with his mother in the palace kitchen. Every spare moment, Diamen and the other boys of the keep would sit and watch the palace guards training in the courtyard.

One day the guard commander came to Diamen and told him the guard was taking on another member and would Diamen like to fill the spot. Diamen was then 16 years old, and already 6′ tall and 180 pounds. He accepted immediately.

After a few years of training Diamen became a very powerful and skilled fighter. He went on many adventures with the palace guard to different parts of the country, fighting in many campaigns and wars with the neighboring kingdom.

By the time Diamen reached 25, he was ranked among the best swordsmen in the kingdom. He was trained in horsemanship, living off the land for great lengths of time, and navigating by the stars.

When the king decided he wanted a company of knights to be his elite royal guard, Diamen was the only choice for leader. The company was assembled and their knightly training began. Soon enough, the whole company was very well skilled, and superbly equipped. The first mission of the new knights was to go into the royal forest and rid it of evil elves. The knights rode into the forest with their armor shining, their shields gleaming, and their swords sharpened. They reached the center of the forest and an almost invisible force of elves decimated the group. Diamen managed to escape with his life (barely), without ever having the chance to strike a blow.

In the face of this defeat, Diamen fled the kingdom in disgrace. He now lives by what wits he has, traveling from town to town, adventuring with any party he considers worthwhile.

New Magic Items

Ring of rhyming: This ring enables the wearer to articulate his or her message into rhyming couplets. This poetic rhyming scheme tends to make the message more effective, as more people will listen. The ring is useable three hours a day, in any combination of time increments.

Stone of sampling: The stone allows the owner to record up to 50, 20-second pieces of speech or music. These "samples" can be recalled mentally by the owner of the stone at any time with no effort, and the samples will remain in the stone until erased by the owner of the stone. The stone is green and smooth, and glows when replaying samples.

Robe of holding: This magical robe looks like any other normal robe, but with many pockets (ld20 + 10). Each pocket has a permanent *deeppockets* spell.

❑

With Great Power

The Doom Wars, Part II

by Steven E. Schend

These short adventures make up a "what if" campaign for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game. Characters for use with the adventures were presented last issue.

Playing the Doom Wars

Each group of pregenerated characters can be considered "heroes." As the campaign opens, every player character is certain he or she is doing good and is on the right side. During play, the characters gain Karma normally. When any hero defeats a hero from the other side he or she receives the normal Karma award.

Each Doom provides his heroes with resources; Doom I has Excellent resources, and Doom II has Amazing.

Doom I's Allies:

Some heroes' reasons for joining Victor are stronger than others, and it is possible that the players, or the GM (acting as Doom I) will have to make an effort to keep the team together.

Doom brooks no dissension from the heroes. Above all, Doom never reveals the whole plan to his underlings.

Doom II's Allies:

Kristoff is not known to the world at large as a nine-year-old. Those around him think he is Victor Von Doom, and Kristoff has been thoroughly brainwashed to believe this, too. All but a select few Latverians believe this Doom to be the rightful leader and Doom I to be an imposter.

His current plan to resist Victor, the other Doom, is to round up mutants detected within Latveria's borders. The mutants are placed in a camp in the Latverian woods, where they are trained to be warriors for Doom's causes. Kristoff chooses the best four mutants as shock troops against Doom I. This "Latverian Protectorate" receives its orders in formal audiences with Doom II and is expected to execute them with perfection.

Since Doom II uses deception and intimidation to keep his troops motivated, there is a good chance his team will fragment, particularly if the truth about the two Dooms becomes known.

Battles for Latveria

The primary focus of the Doom Wars for Doom I and company is to covertly invade Latveria and restore the throne to Victor.

On the other hand, the main goal for the Latverian Protectorate and Doom II is to keep "the imposter" and his allies from overrunning Latveria and stealing "the Master" from his people.

Each scenario includes a list of NPCs who can be used.

Two setups are given with each scenario, one for each team of heroes. Orders for the PCs, the words of Doom I or II, are boxed; the GM should read them to the players, allowing the characters to respond. Neither Doom allows his orders to be questioned.

Adventure Maps

On the inside mailer cover of this Newszine is a map of Castle Doom and Doomstadt for the final scenario. However, this hardly includes all the terrain the PCs will cover. The outdoors area grid from the Advanced Set is useful for most of the encounters; trees, rocks, and other items of particular interest can be placed on this map as the GM sees fit. GMs also can use the maps from *MH-7 The Last Resort* and *MH-9 Gates of What If.*

Adventure One: Trouble in Transia

NPCs: Mary Jane Watson-Parker, Modred, Puppet Master, Silver Sable, Spider-Man

Setup Doom I:

You are in Boston, secluded in an old brownstone on Beacon Street. Publicly, you are guests of a man named David Regal; actually you have been summoned and sequestered here by Victor Von Doom. Doom addresses your group: "All of you have joined me and my cause of your own wills, and you have my word of honor that good will be done here — good for the people of Latveria.

"It is time now to act. We separate at this juncture. I shall continue on my own, and we shall rendezvous in Transia in two days."

Each PC receives a one-way plane ticket to Transia and hotel reservations for a one-night stay at a local inn. One PC receives a map giving a location to meet Doom; written instructions with the map explain how a hidden base can be accessed should Doom fail to arrive at the appointed time—10 p.m. the day after the team's arrival in Transia.

Doom warns the team his counterpart may track the ticket purchases through one of his many aliases. "Do not trust anyone other than the manager of your hotel, Karl Hammak; he knows of your mission and will be helpful to our cause without revealing your mission or your powers."

Setup Doom II:

This takes place roughly one day after Setup Doom I.

You and your companions are nervous. Since you were found to be deserving of Doom's attentions, you have been encamped with others of "special" status and trained to use your developing powers. You four are the first to complete the training. Each of you now wears a communications bracelet that puts you at the Master's beck and call—a great honor. The Master's first message via the bracelets summoned you to an audience in Castle Doom. You hear the mechanical whirring of his armor as he enters the throne room and signals all to rise.

"My most loyal subjects, you have been called together and trained for this moment for the past many months, and you are now ready to serve Latveria. May you be up to the task. We have discerned the location

of the imposter, the false Doom who seeks my throne, and we are told he has allies. You are to confront the false Doom and his allies, but do not destroy them. They will be made to see the folly of defying Doom.

"I have tracked them by scanning for the special isotope the imposter uses to power his armor. He is currently in flight and his trajectory suggests a landing site in Transia, near Wundagore Mountain. A special transport awaits you in the courtyard. Its landing site has been programmed, and a servobot is installed to pilot the craft.

"You should arrive there before the imposter, and you can make your own plans from there. Be sure to disable any equipment the usurpers may use against Latveria, and anything you cannot destroy, bring with you upon your return. Under no circumstances are you to capture these miscreants; I do not want them spoiling our country's air with their foul presence. Defeat them and humiliate them, but do no more, lest you risk my wrath."

The team is in costume, and is led to a small ovoid craft. A panel opens on the craft's side, and the team finds four chairs, a small locker of provisions, a computer link with Castle Doom, and the torso of a robot linked with the craft's control panel. There is an auxiliary control panel. See Doom's Toys for the craft's statistics. This craft has a self-sealing port in the outer hull which allows passengers to exit without the craft losing air pressure. There are no weapons on this craft. The team arrives, as scheduled, at a clearing in the Transian woods at the foot of Wundagore.

Optional Encounters: For team Doom I:

- There is a hijacking attempt on the plane by terrorists.
- Photograph and autograph hounds swarm around the actors and actresses of the soap opera *Secret Hospital.* The one who draws the most attention is the famous actress-model MJ Watson-Parker; her husband shuffles nervously at her side. The troupe is traveling to Transia for a location shoot of *Secret Hospital.*
- The person seated across the aisle from one hero is elderly and nervous; he is soon approached by a tall, slender woman with silver hair, who coldly whispers "You've been upgraded to first class, *herr Schwarzer.* You'll soon stand trial for your war crimes." Silver Sable (the woman) attempts to lead him away, but the man is armed with a loaded gun and he tries to resist. Actions now depend on the heroes and NPCs. Keep in mind that any blasts or gunfire could shatter a window and depressurize the plane.
- A young girl at the back of the plane, obviously nervous about the flight, constantly complains of headaches and body aches. The girl is a latent mutant, and GMs can have her powers initially emerge during the course of this 14-hour flight. Her powers and the effects on other passengers are left to the GM's discretion.
- A small, bald man meets the PCs at the airport and asks to escort them to the hotel. He says he is the owner of the best hotel in Transia, with a majestic view of Wundagore Mountain. If they enter his van, it floods with Amazing intensity knock out gas; the vehicle is reinforced with Vibranium (Incredible material strength) to deter any physical attempts to escape. The PCs have fallen victim to the Puppet Master (Philip Masters), who once again works for Doom (II). He wants to reduce them to mindless slaves, setting them to attack the countryside, terrorize the villagers, and wreak havoc. Doom I can free the heroes from control, but the PCs and Victor are discredited.

The following distractions might bedevil team Doom II:

- Two unidentified jets intercept the PCs' craft. The robot pilot rattles off identification and clearance codes, but both jets begin firing. Use generic Military Jet statistics from the Advanced Set Players' Book for the attacking aircraft (no missiles). The robot asks the hero next to him, "Evasive or attack maneuvers?" and continues this question until answered. If the PCs choose evasive maneuvers, the ship avoids the jets. Otherwise, the jets attack the PCs' craft six times, then break off. Attack maneuvers keep the craft close to the jets, and allows the heroes to use the port in the craft to fly outside and defend themselves. In any case, the robot uses its control to Dodge all incoming attacks. (If the PCs eject, they land 100 miles from Wundagore and must get to the appointed place in one hour or they miss the confrontation.)
- Five minutes before the scheduled landing, the PCs' craft comes under attack by a small craft similar to theirs. The PCs see the imposter Dr. Doom at the controls, with unidentified figures in the craft with him. The attacking craft is identical to the PC craft except that it also has a machine gun (**IN** range and **RM** damage) mounted on its underside and pointing forward. Play this miniscenario out as above, in terms of evasive or attack maneuvers. All figures aboard the attacking craft are robots and do not leave the craft.
- The team has landed and is in hiding at the landing site in the woods. A man enters the clearing, floating along just above the ground. This is Modred, a sorcerer once again possessed by Chthon, an evil power entombed within Wundagore. Within a minute, a small craft drops from the sky carrying the robot Doom I and company. Modred seems annoyed and tries to blast it into oblivion. The PCs can choose to interrupt here, otherwise Modred simply floats off into the trees.

The Action: If team Doom II arrives at their landing site early, they find that they (and Kristoff) have been duped into chasing a robot Doom. In fact, once the robot craft lands, it is on a timed destruct sequence. Ten rounds after it lands, the craft self-destructs with Incredible force damage to all within its area and Excellent damage to all within one area radius of the craft.

Twenty minutes after the landing of the robot craft, Doom flies overhead in a one-man craft (see Doom's Toys for statistics). He proceeds east around the mountain to another clearing five miles away. Here, he meets his own team and the major confrontation begins.

Team Doom I reunites with their leader here. Team Doom II, if not delayed by any other activity (such as fighting Modred), arrives here after spotting Doom's second craft and following it. The clearing is nearly a perfect circle five areas in diameter. It is ringed by dense pine trees. One small road leads to a village 12 miles away. There is hidden cave in the trees to the west; only Doom I and the PC with the map can find it.

Doom I orders his team to attack to

subdue the Doom II team; he intends to return the Latverian Protectorate to Kristoff in disgrace or recruit them to his side. If team Doom II appears to be winning, Doom takes an active hand; otherwise, he stays out of combat.

If his heroes win, Doom I brings them and any prisoners to the cave and reveals two mobile all-terrain transports and a security cell with iron bars.

The defeated Latverians are placed in the cell. The bars are of Amazing material strength and the cell also drains energy; energy powers and technology-based powers do not function within the cell. Doom offers the other heroes a chance to join him and return Latveria to its normal state. The cave also contains six warrior robots which Doom sets on verbal command: "If any of these people leave that cell, eliminate them."

If team Doom II wins the fight in the clearing, Doom sets off buried charges which fill the entire area with knock out gas of Monstrous Intensity for three rounds. If there are any opponents still standing, Doom physically tries to defeat them, collects his allies, and escapes to the cave. He commands the six robots to act as his vanguard, and he flees down a side tunnel with his allies in one of the all-terrain transports.

Follow-up:

Team Doom I If defeated:

> You are rescued by Doom and rushed into the cave to escape with an all-terrain transport. Doom I is angry. "Your defeat mocks me, and you will be put to the test as to your worthiness; do not fail me again or you shall truly earn the wrath of Doom."

Karma: Normal combat and non-combat Karma gains and losses should be awarded, plus specials:
Hero falls under the control of the Puppet Master −5
Avoiding Puppet Master's trap altogether +10

Team Doom II If defeated:

> You awaken in a cell. The imposter Doom attempts to dissuade your loyalties to your monarch and persuade you to join his cause.

Role play Doom I's attempt to recruit the characters. If they accept, they become members of Team Doom I and Kristoff must bring his additional mutants into play. If they refuse, Victor takes his team and leaves the robots on guard. If the cell bars stop the PCs, they might have better luck with the solid rock walls (**IN** strength). The robots do not attack until someone leaves the cell.

Karma: Normal combat and non-combat Karma gains and losses should be awarded, plus specials:
Choosing evasive maneuvers against the jets (Symkarians protecting their air space, they spotted the craft visually) +10
Destruction of robots without confirmation of artificial construction −10
Confirming artificial construction before destroying robots +10

Adventure Two: Forest Foray

NPCs: Margali Szardos, and the Wild Pack

Setup Doom I:

Doom I takes the team through the Transian wilderness and around the Symkarian border to another cave just inside Latveria where they abandon the transport. The team continues on foot for a few miles to a gypsy camp. Doom, once he delivers an old gypsy greeting, is welcomed with open arms.

Kristoff and Symkaria have concluded treaties which make the gypsies hunted outlaws within the two countries; Doom I promises the gypsies a return to their ancestral forests in Latveria upon his return to power. From here, the team's goals depend on which optional encounters the GM uses, and upon the actions of team Doom II.

Setup Team Doom II:

Kristoff contacts the team via their bracelets: "Scans indicate there is a tremendous build-up of power three miles north of your current locations. The power you are looking for will be magical in nature, so take caution. You are to close on the location of this power, held most likely in an item, and secure it for Latveria and its Master." Doom tells the PCs how to activate small scanners in the bracelets; this allows the PCs to track the power source.

Optional Encounters: Team Doom I's trip to the camp is uneventful, but the following encounters might happen after they arrive:

- The festivities get under way when a bright flash of light comes from the main wagon. The gypsies have obtained a magical mirror, and its power has been tapped by Margali Szardos, a powerful sorceress. She knows of Doom's quest and offers to use the mirror to teleport him to a base near Doomstadt. In exchange, she desires to share magical knowledge with Doom, which he promises to give her when he reclaims Latveria's throne. It takes an hour to prepare the rituals to activate the mirror's magic, during which time any of the other encounters can take place.
- A few children are noticed missing early into the festivities. No one has seen them for much of the afternoon, and nightfall brings wolves with it. The GM is free to decide what has happened to the children.
- A squad of Doom II's guardbots has ferreted out the encampment. They mindlessly destroy wagons, animals, and gypsies. There are 12 guardbots, spread in a circle around the encampment.
- One of the PCs (roll randomly) notices a figure at the edge of the firelight. The person's eyes flash brightly, and the PC is strangely attracted to this gypsy. The gypsy motions to the PC, leading away from the fire. The PC must make a successful Psyche FEAT against Remarkable intensity or follow the figure away under a hypnotic spell. The gypsy is a vampire who happened across the camp and is stopping for a bite.

Team Doom II spends its time working through the forests and responding to Doom's orders. The group can encounter numerous creatures and situations in the nighttime forests:

- Near the Symkarian frontier, a squad of soldiers erupts from the underbrush and surrounds the PCs. They are members of the Wild Pack, and a few remain in the trees, watching any flying characters.

  "Halt and identify yourselves!" barks one. If the PCs identify themselves by codenames or their status as Latverian operatives, the leader relaxes. "Ah, we were wondering when you'd happen along. Sable has been notified by Doom of your status, and she'd hoped we could recruit you in our latest hunt. We're tracking down a Nazi war criminal, a former ally of the Red Skull, and we've pinpointed his trail along our bor-

ders. Doom promised your assistance, "if there were no other pressing matters." Well, can you aid us?" If they help, they find a young woman struggling to pull an elderly man from the smoking remains of a jeep stuck firmly in a ditch. The man is Wilhelm Fruktaus, a former engineer and weaponsmith for the Red Skull. The woman appeals to the PCs, insisting that her father must meet with Herr Doom about an urgent matter.

- As the PCs move slowly through the moonlit forest, they hear the frantic bleating of frightened sheep. As they approach, the cries of the sheep are suddenly cut off, followed by crunching and chewing sounds. When they cross a small rise, they find a bowl-like depression in the forest. In it, a large creature is huddled over a fallen sheep. It turns and rears up on its hind legs; it is a man with lupine features, his clothes in tatters hanging about him—a werewolf!

The Action: The gypsy camp is 4 areas wide and 12 areas long. There are 13 wagons in the outer areas, the easternmost is Margali's, which is set perpendicular to the others to close off that end of the camp. There is a large goat pen filling the 2 central areas at the west end. There are five campfires with empty areas between them inside the camp. Doom I is in Margali's wagon, and his allies are scattered about the camp as the players see fit (as the aftermath of the optional encounters allows). If Doom plans to utilize the magical mirror, it will be ready to transport him and his allies — three minutes after the Latverian Protectorate arrives.

For the Latverian Protectorate, read the following:

> Deep in the Latverian woods, and directly on top of the power readings you've been tracking, you come across a gypsy camp. There is some kind of celebration going on. However, the Master has decreed that gypsies are no longer welcome in Latveria, so these folk are defying the law. The encampment is stretched along a partially wooded clearing, its wagons in two rows along the outside edges of the camp with cooking fires in between. Your team is just outside the western edge of the camp. There is a set of goat pens between you and the gypsies.

The goats notice the Latverian Protectorate, even if they attempt to remain concealed and quiet. And the goats make enough noise to alert team Doom I. Victor does not appear until two minutes have gone by, when he warns his allies to be ready for transport.

The members of team Doom I are hard to find in the crowd of gypsies. Each individual remains indistinguishable until a team Doom II character who has previously encountered him comes within 3 areas.

The gypsies defend only their wagons and their kind, assuming the PCs can protect themselves. Margali responds to any attacks with her confusion spell. Doom I remains hidden in the wagon, anticipating the mirror's teleport field. Anyone within the wagon when it activates is teleported with Doom to the next scenario.

Follow-up: Karma awards are given normally, though there are special circumstances. For Doom I's allies, 5 Karma are lost with each wagon destroyed, since these heroes are the gypsies' allies. If they stay and help fix the wagons (a day to fix two wagons), they regain 5 Karma for each wagon repaired. The Protectorate gains 20 Karma if they aid the Wild Pack, and likewise lose 20 Karma for aiding and abetting a fugitive from international justice (even if it does help the Master).

Adventure Three: Closing the Camps

NPCs: Frankenstein's Monster, Herald, Jinx, Magneto, Razor

Setup Team Doom I:

> You find yourselves in a mountain cave roughly seven miles west of Castle Doom, overlooking a small, fenced camp in the forest. Doom declares that this camp must be destroyed, and the mutants inside it returned to their homes. He warns you to avoid coming too close to the fence; it projects a field which disrupts mutant powers, and may impede other powers as well.

Setup Team Doom II:

Doom II announces he is sending a craft to return the characters to the camp for further training. If a PC mentions watching the mountains and the scenery as they fly, have that character make an Intuition FEAT roll; on a Yellow or Red result, the character notices a flash of light in a cave high in the mountains (team Doom I arriving via the magical mirror or otherwise). The robot craft will not allow anyone to exit until they are within the camp confines. Once there, the PCs are reunited with other comrades of the Protectorate.

Optional Encounters:

Team Doom I might face the following distractions:

- The cave the team has entered is the Frankenstein Monster's home. If the creature is treated kindly, he may help the team destroy the camp.
- Doom I attacks the camp without the PCs' help. As he approaches, Doom's voice booms out, amplified by his armor and overriding the guardbots' programming. The camp's two Doombots, however, are not so easily reprogrammed and call for the mutants to attack; this causes the robots to cancel the inhibitor field and Doom is engulfed in a pitched battle.
- Twelve villagers storm the camp gate while the PCs work their way down the mountain. They are armed with rifles, pitchforks, and scythes. They are simply looking to free their abducted sons and daughters. The robots fire on them mercilessly.

Team Doom II can fall into these optional exercises:

- One of the Doombots develops a flaw in its circuitry due to the unusual energy in the fence. Its logic circuits are nearly gone, and it mindlessly attacks the PCs as they attempt to land at the camp.
- One of the other mutants (most likely Herald) has begun to speak against the Master, proclaiming: "We're not trainees or loyal guards of the realm — we're prisoners! The Master who sits on Latveria's throne is the imposter! He is an addled nine-year-old child with the Master's mind!" Such talk, of course, invites action and discipline from the robots. The PCs must decide who to aid and who to fight here.
- The team is awakened by the sounds of battle. Night has fallen, but lamps make the courtyard bright as day. Magneto, master of magnetism and self-proclaimed shepherd of mutants, is destroying the robots. His back is to the PCs, and they spot a robot sneaking up behind him with a power inhibitor. If aided, Magneto

offers the PCs a chance to side with him and become warriors for the mutant cause world-wide. He does not force anyone to his side.

The Action:

Camp Layout: The camp is 10 areas square, surrounded by an inner, barbed-wire fence 20 feet high. There is an outer fence, 40 feet high 2 areas beyond the inner fence. A band of fresh stumps, 2 areas wide, around the outer fence marks the camp as a recent invasion into the forests. Each fence has an inhibitor field that dampens all mutant abilities; these fields are undetectable and are twice as high as the fence that generates them.

There is a 50-foot tall guard tower at each corner of the inner fence, situated in the 2-area space between the fences. Each guard tower has three guardbots on duty. There is a special energy gun in each tower which neutralizes mutant powers for 2-20 turns in addition to Excellent energy damage.

The camp is dotted with six buildings, with a water tower and a power generator in the southwest corner. All the buildings are of Excellent material strength concrete, with the interior walls lined with wood panelling and carpeting. Water and power lines are buried two feet under the compound's packed earth confines. The buildings are arranged with their doors leading into the central courtyard. The buildings ring a courtyard that acts as a landing pad for flying craft, or an open air training ground for the mutants here.

In the northwest corner of the compound, a 1×2 area building serves as the robot barracks and recharging station; eight guardbots are there recharging at any time unless the alarm is sounded (all robots are active while the alarm sounds). Centered on the western end of the camp is a 1-area-square building for the two Doombots. One recharges while the second tends to the training, save during alarms when both are active.

A 1×2 area building centered on the eastern side of the camp houses the mess hall and kitchen. Barracks are separated by gender, and each is 2 areas square; the men's barracks are centered on the southern edge of the camp, while the women's barracks are in the southeast corner.

The training hall, a 3×4 area building which stretches from the northeast corner along the northern perimeter, contains advanced equipment and monitors to train the mutants to use their powers. The equipment and capabilities of this training facility match that of the X-Men's original Danger Room. All the machinery is of Incredible material strength, and is controlled from a booth high along the northwest wall (reached by a ladder).

There currently are nine mutants in the camp: Jinx, Herald, and Razor are detailed in Part I. The remaining six are trainees with only latent abilities. They have Excellent Endurance and Typical rankings in all other ability scores (Health 38, Karma 18). Each mutant wears a bracelet similar to the ones the PCs wear, but these have been specially keyed to the camp's power generator. If any of the nine stray more than 7 areas from the inner fence the character automatically suffers Excellent damage each round. Each character's bracelet delivers an energy or radiation attack delivered directly to the character's neural system.

The Action: The confrontation can include or exclude all of the optional encounters listed above. At the very least, team Doom I will attack the camp, destroying the fences, robots, and buildings, and attempting to free the mutants. Team Doom II has a number of choices to make:

1. Attack Doom and his allies, and defeat "the imposter and his lackeys."
2. Throw in with Doom I and allies to confront Kristoff.
3. Wait until freed by Doom and simply return to their villages to take up their former lives again.

Once the assault on the camp begins, one Doombot contacts Castle Doom. The castle sends a craft which arrives over the camp in three minutes and releases 20 killer robots with orders to eliminate any living beings within the camp; Doom II has tired of his agents' failures and has decided to cancel the Protectorate project — permanently.

Follow-up: Karma awards are standard for combat and role-playing, though specific awards can be earned:

Team Doom I
Recruit Frankenstein's Monster +20
Destroy camp robots + highest ability score/each
Destroy camp +10
Harm mutants in camp −20
Defeat killer robots +75 each
Teamwork with camp mutants +20/each character befriended

Team Doom II
Defeat faulty Doombot +30
Save dissenter (Herald) +10
Help robots vs. dissenter −10
Attack dissenter −10
Protect trainees from any attacks +5
Join Doom I and allies vs. Kristoff +10

Whatever the outcome of any battles, the camp likely will be destroyed by one faction or another. Doom I escapes and makes for a safehouse in Doomstadt. Any allies are welcome to join him as he plans a final assault on Kristoff.

All of Doom II's allies should attempt a Reason feat. A green result (yellow for Combat) indicates that the character realizes Victor is the true Dr. Doom, and that Kristoff is an imposter. The GM might wish to allow automatic success if the members of team Doom II are NPCs. Doom forgives any assaults made against his person by the Protectorate, "...for it is no crime to have been duped by my doppelganger. You have served him well, as I should expect you to obey me." He easily removes the bracelets which the Protectorate and the camp mutants wear, and gives them leave to choose their path.

If team Doom II does not join Victor they face almost certain death or capture at the hands of Doom I and his allies. They have very few options even if they manage to escape. If they return to Castle Doom, Kristoff—who is infuriated by their failure—tries to kill or imprison them. If they hide in Doomstadt, they still must face Kristoff's wrath when he discovers them. If they flee into the countryside, Kristoff probably will send wave after wave of killer robots at them until they surrender or are slain. They cannot hide from Doom II, who can trace them through their bracelets. PCs must make a red Strength feat to remove a bracelet.

Adventure Four: Assault on Doomstadt

NPCs: Boris, Josef (the Burgomaster)

Setup: Doom I finds a safehouse for himself and his allies with Josef, his loyal burgomaster. They are soon joined by Doom's faithful servant Boris. Doom explains that Kristoff had gone unbidden into his laboratory and accidentally activated some machines which brainwashed him. "I must cure the boy of this madness soon, before more innocents are harmed." With that, Doom takes off down hidden tunnels leading

to the bowels of Castle Doom.

Just as Doom leaves, cries come from the streets "Help! The robots are loosed! Keep to your homes!" Kristoff has released more robots into Doomstadt, hoping to flush out his opponents.

Optional Encounters:

- Boris has contacted the Fantastic Four independently, requesting their aid. He wants their help in preventing the needless deaths Kristoff's excesses are causing. The FF meets the heroes in the Burgomaster's house after Doom has departed.
- The Wizard arrives in Latveria, itching for revenge against Doom for insults traded during the Acts of Vengeance fiasco. He has collected another Frightful Four to combat Doom, and he attempts to draw Doom out by destroying Doomstadt. The Frightful Four consists of the Wizard, the Trapster, Quicksand, and Klaw.

The Action: The heroes are beset in Doomstadt by a force of Doom II's robots. The first wave consists of 2-20 guardbots, with a like wave of killer robots and a wave of guardian robots following at five-minute intervals.

There are 14 innocent people out on the streets at this time in the evening spread out along the two streets closest to Castle Doom. The robots emerge from Castle Doom on its southwest side, and move quickly to the attack. Common people, but not the heroes, are safe from attack if they move more than 1 area north of Doomstadt, into the forest.

Follow-up: After the robot assault, Doom's voice (nobody can tell which Doom) is heard over loudspeakers. "Dear citizens, you have been done a great evil. My doppelganger was the one who released the mechanized assault forces into our fair city in hopes of destroying any faithful servants I had there. Thanks to our Latverian protectors, we have survived. The imposter is still loose and must be dealt with harshly for these heinous acts! Return to your homes in peace, though my keep may erupt in battle against mine enemies. Keep your faith in your Master, for with Latveria's soul behind him, Doom shall always triumph!"

The PCs are given free lodging in town and are revered by the populace for their aid.

Karma awards:
Each building damaged −5
Guardbot destroyed +10
Warrior Robot destroyed +20
Killer Robot destroyed +75
Latverian rescued/saved +5 each

Doom's Day!

Setup: Doom I is in Castle Doom confronting Kristoff alone. If the PCs decide to storm the keep, they have to contend with 4-40 guardian robots, 5-50 guardbots; 2-20 doombots, and 10-100 soldiers. The soldiers have Typical abilities except for Good endurance and Fighting (Health 32, Karma 18). They are armed with force pistols (Excellent energy damage) or energized pole-arms (Remarkable force damage + Good edged damage), or both. There are also automatic laser batteries: one in each of the smaller towers, three in each of the eastern towers, and five in both the central and southern towers. These batteries fire with Remarkable accuracy on any targets within 1 area, dealing Incredible force damage.

Optional Encounters: Once within Doom's castle, it is up to the GM to map and guide the players. Doom's technology is everywhere, with deadly traps and gadgets aplenty to keep intruders busy. PCs searching the castle can stumble across any number of Doom's inventions, including:

- Robotized suits of armor.
- The Micro-projector, capable of sending people to the Microverse and the Micro-World of Queen Pearla.
- Liddleville, the tiny town of puppets.
- Dr. Doom's Time Machine
- Power Cosmic Stealer and Energizer.
- Zorba's Eye-beam weapon.
- A new Darkoth android, ready for new brain patterns.
- The inert body of the Super-Adaptoid, stolen from Avengers Island during the Acts of Vengeance.

The trip through the castle can open up numerous adventures. Could the PCs handle being sent to the Microverse? an alternate past? Who might they find in the deepest recesses of Von Doom's dungeons? Mysteries await. . . .

Follow-up: Here are a few questions for the GM to answer after the smoke clears:

- Will either Doom allow the Latverian Protectorate to operate within the country's borders as its official superteam?
- Do any heroes return to their families and the normal life?
- Does any PC break with Doom and Latveria altogether, leaving with any of the potential NPCs such as the FF or Puppet Master?
- If a PC abandons his alliance with Doom, how does Doom react to this affront?
- Will Victor Von Doom honor the spirit of his promises to all his allies in this struggle if he survives?

Further Options

The Doom Wars offer many possibilities. Will the Avengers, newly reorganized by the United Nations, interfere with the Latverian civil war, especially when it spills over into Transia and Symkaria? Has one of the Dooms recruited the most ruthless of allies, bringing known supervillains into the fray? Could the trainer of Kristoff's mutant forces be the Terminator?

What happens when both Dooms unleash some of their most terrifying technologies upon each other? What if Kristoff uses the Power Cosmic Energizer, and manages to assimilate all that power?

No matter which adventures you play, your heroes (on either side) will emerge with different views of an old foe.

NPCs and Innocent Bystanders

Non-powered NPCs/Bystanders

Farmers

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
PR	TY	GD	EX	PR	TY	TY

Gypsies

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
TY	GD	TY	EX	PR	TY	TY

Terrorists

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	GD	TY	EX	PR	TY	TY

Townsmen

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
PR	TY	PR	TY	PR	TY	TY

Doom I
Victor Von Doom, high tech wonder

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
RM	EX	RM	IN	AM	IN	AM

Health: 120 Karma: 140

Powers:
Much of Doom's power is provided by

his armor.
Body Armor (Equipment): Incredible (40) Material strength; Incredible (40) protection from physical and energy attacks.
Electrical Attack (Equipment): Unearthly (100) electrical shock to any in direct contact with Doom, Incredible (40) electrical shock to those in same area.
Force Bolts (Equipment): Gauntlets fire bolts of force, up to Amazing (50) damage with range of 10 areas.
Force Field (Equipment): Monstrous intensity Force Field against physical and energy attacks; Doom cannot attack while the Force Field is operating.
Flight (Equipment): Armor's jetpack allows Excellent (20) Air Speed.
Handgun (Equipment): Excellent (20) force damage at a range of 2 areas.
Life Support (Equipment): Survival of Incredible (40) rank.
Magical Ability: Self-taught magic allows Eldritch Bolts of up to Amazing (50) rank with a 5-area range.
Mind Transferral: Amazing (50) ability to transfer minds between bodies upon eye contact; target makes a Psyche FEAT to resist.

Talents: Engineering, Inventing, Mystic Background, Occult Lore, Robotics, Weapon and Energy Systems

Dr. Victor Von Doom is a ruthless and dangerous egomaniac who disposes of any opposition he confronts. He easily blames others for his faults, and forever holds grudges about wrongs done to him, whether real or imagined. Despite his vanity and ego, he has a true sense of honor and nobility, and can be trusted to keep his word.

Dr. Doom has mellowed over the years despite constant opposition to his schemes by the superhuman community at large. His setbacks teach him patience, but his pride is not to be stilled. Victor is a powerful warrior, a brilliant scientist, and a strong ruler, but he is a flawed man, forever suppressing the better aspects of his character.

Victor attempts to recruit to his side any Latverians who attack him. He wishes no ill to his people, least of all those whom his double has duped into service. He wishes to set them straight so they can serve their true Master in ousting the nine-year-old despot.

Dr. Doom II

Kristoff Von Doom, high tech wonder

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
RM	EX	RM	IN	AM	IN	AM

Health: 120 Karma: 140

Powers:
Kristoff wears a suit of armor which is functionally identical to Victor's armor. The only difference between the two sets of armor is that Kristoff's armor is primarily an exoskeleton built to house his nine-year-old body and mimic the size, movements, and voice of Dr. Doom. There also are cosmetic changes in the armor, such as exposed chain mail along the thighs and arms as opposed to Doom I's full plate armor.

Talents: Kristoff also possesses all of Victor's talents.

Since he partially assumed Victor Von Doom's memories, Kristoff believes he is the original Von Doom, trapped in a child's body (though his armored suit gives him an adult's appearance). Like Victor, he is tremendously egotistical and vain.

Kristoff differs from Victor in his degree of self-control. Doom II is much more impulsive, arrogant, and erratic than Doom I. He is a less mature Doom, more possessed of fire and action than the subtler, elder Doom. Doom II's nobility and honor are still to be trusted, but impulsiveness and impatience boil to the surface much more quickly.

Margali Szardos

Margali of the Winding Way, Master Practitioner of Faerie Magic

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	GD	TY	IN	EX	AM	MN

Health: 26 Karma: 145

Powers:
Magic: All of Margali's powers stem from her mastery of Faerie Magic. Margali has the following spells, in addition to any number of spells she has not exhibited or powers which cannot be quantified:
•*Alteration*—change appearance at AM ability
•*Astral Projection*—UN ability
•*Confusion*—MN intensity; the target must make a Psyche FEAT or be engulfed in a swirling void empty of all but Margali's face and voice.
•*Conjuration*—teleport items and people to her location at UN range and ability
•*Dimensional Travel*—UN ability
•*Eldritch Bolts*—AM force or energy bolts from her eyes
•*Eldritch Beams*—MN energy beams from her hands
•*Image Projection*—AM ability
•*Mystic Shield*—MN protection against energy or physical attacks

Talents: Chronicler of Magic, Gypsy Lore, Mystic Background, Occult Lore

Werewolves

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
RM	EX	RM	IN	TY	AM	GD

Health: 120 Karma: 66

Powers:
Lycanthropy: All werewolves are victims of a disease which causes a metamorphosis from a human to lupine form when exposed to the light of a full moon. When in human form, a lycanthrope's statistics range from Poor to Good. The remaining powers listed are for the werewolf form only.
Claws: Good Material Strength claws and teeth inflict up to Excellent Edged damage.
Infravision: Werewolves see in the dark with Excellent ability.
Invulnerability: Werewolves have an Amazing resistance to all forms of physical attacks save those from silver weapons.
Leaping: Werewolves can leap with Excellent ability.
Tracking: Due to enhanced senses of hearing, smell, and sight, werewolves can track living beings with Incredible ability.
Vulnerability to Silver: Werewolves must make an Endurance FEAT with each hit by a silver weapon; a White result is considered a Kill.

Wild Pack

Agents of Symkaria and Silver Sable International

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	EX	TY	EX	GD	GD	GD

Health: 66 Karma: 30

Talents: Each Wild Pack member exhibits at least 1-4 of the following talents: Acrobatics, Demolitions, Detective/Espionage, First Aid, Guns, Law Enforcement/Military, Marksman, Martial Arts A, B, and E

History: The Wild Pack is Silver Sable's warrior force, trained to capture Nazi war criminals. Recently they have spread operations to more mercenary goals, lending out their services to support Symkaria's economy. They are professional soldiers who prefer to remain behind the scenes, unnoticed until it is time to strike.

DARK SUN™ Arena Character Sheet

Player Name: _____ Membership Number: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

STR: **Age:**
DEX: **Height:**
CON: **Weight:**
INT: **Hair Color:**
WIS: **Eye Color:**
CHR:
Base Armor Class:
Front Armor Class:
Rear Armor Class:
Hit Points:

Proficiencies:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Nonweapon Proficiencies:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Equipment and Armor:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thieving Percentages

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL

Spells Memorized

Magic Items

Character Name: _____
Race: _____
Age: _____
Class and Level: _____
Experience Points: _____

PSIONICS

Psionic Strength Points: _____

Wild Talents: _____

_____

_____

_____

FOR PSIONICIST CLASS ONLY

Disciplines: _____

_____

Sciences: _____

_____

Devotions: _____

_____

Modes: _____

_____

_____

_____

Wealth

Creating A DARK SUN™ Arena Character

The RPGA™ Network is offering you a sneak peak at the DARK SUN™ campaign setting through combat action!

This activity will premier at the 1991 GEN CON® Game Fair. If you are not going to the oldest and best gaming convention around -- don't worry. Other conventions will be sponsoring DARK SUN arena combats.

To get in on the arena floor of all the fun, follow these easy instructions. Then watch convention program books for details on how to enter your character.

Start At Third Level

Create a third-level AD&D® 2nd Edition Game character -- fighter, wizard, thief, cleric, or druid then add one Wild Talent as per pages 19-21 of ***The Complete Psionics Handbook***.

OR, create a third-level psionicist, also per ***The Complete Psionics Handbook***.

You have 100 points to divide among your character's Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, and Charisma. Do not worry about percentile points for Strength bonuses. That will be handled when you show up at the arena.

Your character can be a human, half-elf, elf, dwarf, or halfling. Select weapon and non-weapon proficiencies from the ***Player's Handbook***. Your character may be of any alignment.

All third-level characters have maximum hit points. For example, a fighter has 30 hit points; a thief, 18 hit points; a cleric, 24 hit points; a wizard, 12 hit points; and a psionicist, 18 hit points. Next, add Constitution bonuses. You start out with the base number of experience points for third level for your respective class.

The Arena Attendant will supply arms and armor for your character.

If you have questions, ask the Arena Attendant.

Equipment

Normal Equipment (choose four)

Leather Backpack	Green Silk Gloves
Large Sack	Snakeskin Boots
Small Wooden Chest	Orange Sash
Large Belt Pouch	Black Leather Belt
Empty Wineskin	Blue Vest
Small Tent	Breeches or Kilt
Blanket	Sandles
Candle	Red Hat
Flint and Steel	Obsidian Mirror
One Flask of Oil	Soap, 8 oz.
Torch	Obsidian Razor
Lantern	Quill
Whetstone	Ink, 1 oz.
Hourglass	Paper, 10 sheets
Rope, 50'	Thieves' Picks
Silver Bell	Lizard's Foot
Signal Whistle (bone)	Songbird
Chalk	Pet Rock
Bridle	Pig
Flint Knife	Beans, 25
Poetry Book	Flour, 1 lb.
Worry Stone	Tortoise Shell

Miscellaneous Magic (choose two)

Potion of Diminution
Potion of Extra-healing
Potion of Healing
Potion of Invisibility
Potion of Growth
Potion of Rainbow Hues
Potion of Sweet Water
Potion of Water Breathing
Slippers of Spider Climbing
Boots of Elvenkind
Boots of Speed
Bracers of Brachiation
Bag of Holding (capacity: 250#, 30 cu. ft.)
Hat of Disguise
Wand of Wonder (10 charges)
Gloves of Missile Snaring
Lenses of Subtitles
Murlynd's Spoon
Ring of Swimming

Use this space to list more information about your character's psionic abilities:

Ability	Score	PSP Cost Init/Mnt

Doom's Toys

This campaign supplement could go on for 10 more pages regarding the technology available to the two Dooms. Details on items mentioned within the campaign scenarios are listed here. Each Doom certainly can have more at his disposal.

Transportation

All-Terrain Transports

Doom's transports are about the size of a regular van. They have six seats and a cargo area. Each has a built-in first aid station and computer. The transports have six wheels, and are capable of land or sea movement. Their statistics are:
Land transport mode: Control RM, Land Speed EX, Body RM, Protection RM.
Sea/Underwater transport modes: Control EX, Sea Speed IN, Underwater Speed EX, Body RM, Protection RM

The transports are sometimes equipped with machine guns, and always have 1-4 force pistols (EX force damage, range 2 areas) in the cargo bay.

Flyers

Doom's flyers ride on magnetic waves, ensuring silent and rapid flight. They are radar invisible, though they can be tracked by scanning specifically for magnetic pulses along their trajectory.
One man flyer: Control RM, Air Speed AM, Body EX, Protection EX.
Four man flyer: Control: IN (robot pilot)/ EX (character pilot), Air Speed RM, Body GD, Protection EX.

Robots

Doom's robots vary in form, function, and effectiveness. There are three specific types which the player characters may encounter in the campaign. Many of the robots in these scenarios are under independent control, not directly operated by Doom II.

Doombots: Doombots are designed to act as proxies for Doom, either in negotiations or in battles. When alone, the Doombots each believe themselves to *be* Doom; their programming allows them to act as Doom unless in the presence of Doom or another Doombot. The Doombots the PCs encounter at the camp are Combat Doombots, specifically programmed to fight, but not kill, the mutants in training sessions.

The Combat Doombots have the following statistics and abilities:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	EX	EX	RM	EX	EX	EX

Health: 90 Karma: 60
- Incredible(40) Material Strength
- Incredible(40) Body Armor
- Amazing(50) Intensity Force Beams
- Monstrous(75) Force Field
- Unearthly(100) Electrical Shock
- Excellent flight from waist-mounted rockets

Guardbots: Guardbots are non-humanoid robots used to patrol Latveria's borders or control the populace. They use wheels for mobility, granting them lightning speed. These robots follow their programmed orders strictly and without thought.

The Guardbots have the following statistics and abilities:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	GD	TY	GD	PR	PR	PR

Health: 36
- Typical(6) Material Strength
- Typical(6) Body Armor
- Excellent(20) Intensity Force Blasters
- Entangling arms of Excellent Material Strength
- Incredible(40) Intensity Knock Out Gas
- Lightning speed of six areas/round

Killer robots: These humanoid robots were designed to be ultimate machines of destruction. They were only intended to be used if Doom was no longer in control of Latveria. Once released, they cannot be controlled by Castle Doom or Doom himself.

The killer robots have the following statistics and abilities:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	EX	AM	MN	FE	FE	FE

Health: 165 Karma: 6
- Amazing(50) Material Strength
- Amazing(50) Body Armor

Warrior robots: These are the standard guards and shock troops in Doom's arsenal. They are humanoid and large (8' tall), built to intimidate the masses. They can speak and are able to receive vocal commands from Doom.

The warrior robots have the following statistics and abilities:

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	GD	GD	EX	PR	PR	PR

Health:60
- Good(10) Material Strength
- Good(10) Body Armor
- Remarkable(30) Intensity Force or Energy Blasters

Miscellaneous Technology

Doom has spent the past 30 years designing and inventing hordes of new technology. Only a smattering of this has been seen in comic books or in game material. The following is a short list of various gadgets which the PCs may encounter when inside Castle Doom; perhaps Doom II might equip some of his robots with new technology to surprise the hapless heroes.

Encephalo Beams: Subconsciously prevents attacks on Doom (FF #246, 247)
Micro-projector or shrinking gas: Sends (people to the Microverse (FF #16)
Power Cosmic Energizer: (FF #258)
Power Cosmic Stealer: (FF #57-61)
Puppet Projection Technology: Places minds within tiny puppets and Liddleville) (FF #236)
Time Machine: (various FF issues)
Zorba's eye beam weapon: (FF #200, 247)

The End?

I'd love to hear the results and comments about your Doom Wars campaigns. Right now, my biggest critic is Uatu; the big guy reads over my shoulder as I write. I don't mind so much, but he points a lot, and his hand appearing between me and my computer screen is disconcerting. "Hey, fella, just stick to watching, will ya?"

❑

Bookwyrms

History's Greatest Role-Playing Adventure

by Doug Niles

Many tales come to mind when one considers the roots of fantasy role playing: most people immediately think of the epics of classical mythology, the stories of the Norse gods, the legends of King Arthur, and so on. While many of these vaguely are based on historical events, they all are heavily mythological — so much so that they are regarded as fables and legends.

One epic tale, however, has its roots in pure history. It depicts savage and bloodthirsty gods, is replete with horrid rituals, and has elements resembling magic and sorcery.

I write, of course, about the epic conquest of Mexico by Hernan Cortes and his small band of conquistadors. ("Small" is a relative term; Cortes' 400 men would make for a huge AD&D® game party, but one must not overlook the fact that he was attempting to conquer a land with some 13 million inhabitants.)

This always has been a story that fascinated me, As a youth, stories of the battles, the appalling sacrifices, and the splendors of lost Tenochtitlan piqued my interest and inflamed my sense of adventure. The Aztec's golden treasures and knightly orders, balanced against the audacity and ruthlessness of the conquistadors, was surely the stuff of an epic tale.

The shocking effects of horses and gunpowder upon the Mexican warriors bear close resemblance to the effects of magic in a fantasy battle, at least when it comes to morale. The waves of Aztec warriors, with full war garb, feathers, and banners must have been a spectacle worthy of Cecil B. DeMille.

As I grew older, the thorny moral issues of the conquest began to fascinate me. The conquistadors' motivations were open to question. Greed, lust for power, and a primitive love of adventure are prominent. The empire they annihilated boasted forms of art, literature, and science that had not emerged elsewhere on the globe.

On the other hand, the Aztecs practiced human sacrifice on a scale that, to my knowledge, no other culture even approached. As the conquest spread across the New World with its attendant scourges of plague and slavery, it *did* eliminate the cults of sacrifice.

Finally, anyone who lives in North America should be aware of the profound historical impact this tiny little campaign waged 500 years ago had on western history. It shaped the future of not only Mexico, but all of the Americas and the emerging empires of Europe as well.

These elements seemed tailor made for a fantasy role-playing interpretation, and they have been squirming around in my mind for years. The final result has become the **Maztica** trilogy, set in the Forgotten Realms. Also, this month sees the release of the Maztica boxed set, a FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign accessory that details the lands introduced in the trilogy.

I must emphasize that the tale of the **Maztica** trilogy is fiction — *fantasy* fiction with elements such as wizards, spells, enchanted items, monsters, and gods who take an active interest in the goings-on in the world itself. Do not read these books expecting to learn the history of the Spanish Conquest.

Anyone even remotely familiar with the history, however, will notice that the **Maztica** story was inspired by real events. For example, some characters in the novels (specifically: Captain-General Cordell, his officer Alvarro, and the Revered Counsellor Naltecona) are based on actual historical figures (respectively: Cortes, Captain Pedro de Alvarado, and Moctezuma). Of these, Alvarro was the simplest—he's a villain, and most histories provide clear suggestions for his villainy. Cordell was a lot more challenging because he could be neither hero nor villain—at least not in the context in which I was viewing the story. In AD&D® game terms, his alignment comes out in the Lawful Neutral (Evil) category. Naltecona is the most fascinating because he represents to me a figure with the status of a classic tragic hero. He is trapped between a belief in a prophecy that told of a new ruler arriving to take control of his lands and the natural urges of the warlike leader of a warlike nation. He is dismayed and indecisive; when he finally chooses to act it is too late.

On the other hand, there were plenty of chances to fantasize the tale. The main characters, Erixitl and Halloran, have no historical basis. The magic of Maztica, including *pluma* (feather magic) and *hishna* (talon magic) are obviously fantastic. The presence of non-human races (drow, elves, dwarves, and halflings) in Maztica also give a decidedly fictional slant to the tales. The trilogy also tells the story of how orcs, trolls, and ogres were introduced into the continent.

Perhaps the most dramatic departure from history comes from the divergent endings of the two tales. Given the conquistadors' missionary zeal there was little chance Mexican culture, history, or architecture would survive. Indeed these crusaders seemed to throw the baby out with the bath water as they outlawed the native religions. One Friar Landa, who is known for preserving most of what we know about Mayan culture, destroyed a hundred times what he preserved, claiming that it was religiously inappropriate. I have always found the historical ending to the tale disappointing because the bad guys didn't get what was coming to them and too many good things were destroyed when the native Mexican culture virtually was exterminated. This is where the **Maztica** trilogy differed most significantly from historical events.

At the story's close, Maztica is in flux. Many new things have been introduced, and the wealth of treasure found there has attracted the attention of the rest of the world. Monsters roam the land. However, the Mazticans control much of their own continent, and the cult of sacrifice has been driven underground. There are still some wild-eyed priests running around, stone daggers in hand, seeking victims for their gory rituals, but the cult no longer overshadows the land. Invaders from the Sword Coast still are present, but they have not yet succeeded in subjugating Maztica and enslaving its people. They might never succeed.

As the trilogy closes, the forces of the new and the old, of enlightenment and darkness vie for control. With the release of the boxed set, Maztica's fate lie with you, the players.

Back To Basics

Revitalizing The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game

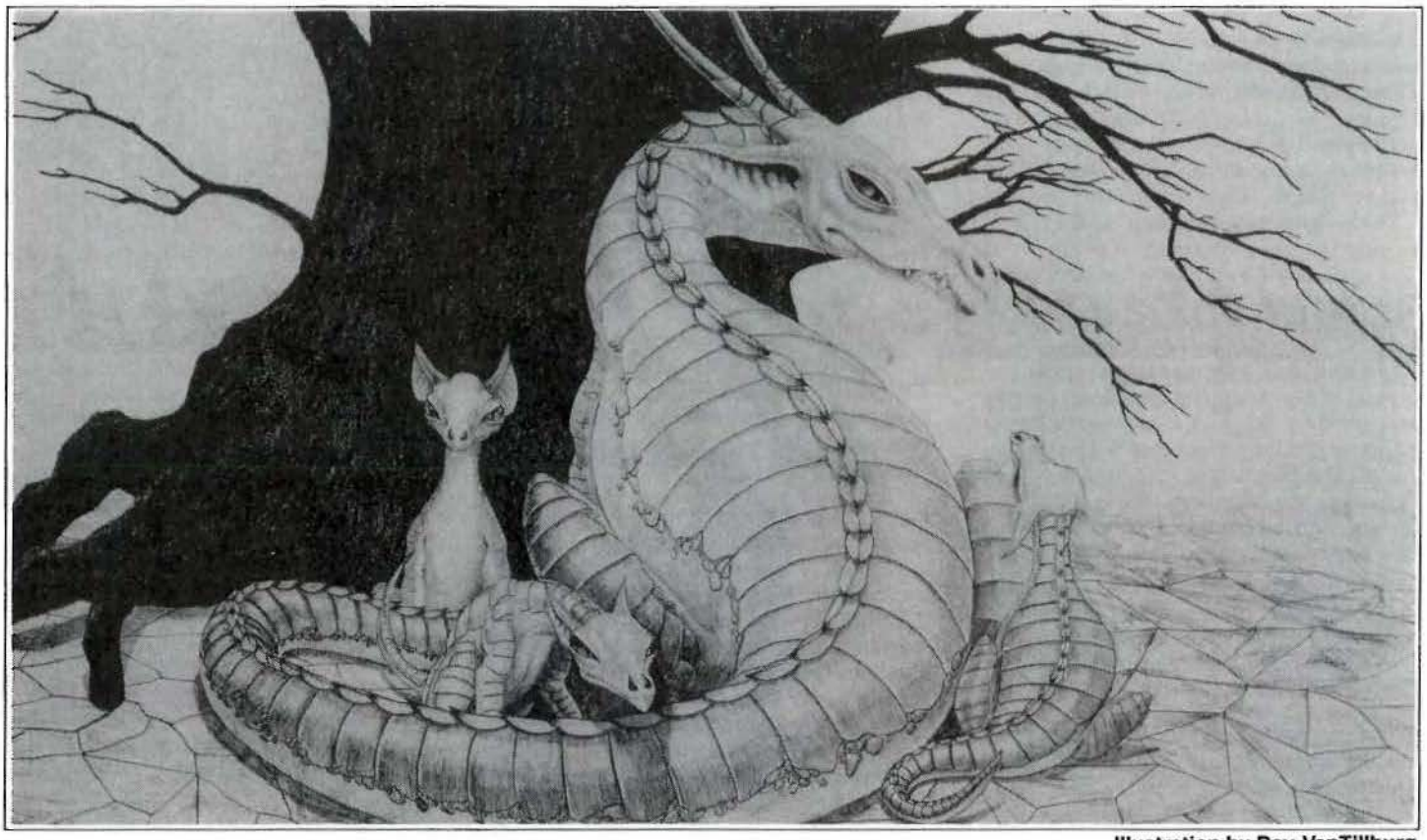

Illustration by Ray VanTillburg

The original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, now up-to-date and easy to understand, is revolutionizing role-playing by bringing new players into gaming's fold.

The game, released last spring, was a mammoth undertaking, says designer Troy Denning, who polished and improved it—without changing the rules. Denning will also author at least one DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game adventure which will be on the shelves next year.

"The game is targeted for people who have wanted to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS games and have never had friends who knew how to play or who never had the time to learn. It's for adults and kids," said Denning, whose other credits include the AD&D® 2nd Edition game *Legends & Lore* tome and several FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting novels.

"When I first took on the project," Denning recalls, "I thought it was simply cleaning up the rules. I thought I could do it in a week or two. It wasn't like it was going to be a big deal. Then Lorraine Williams, TSR's president, said, "Oh no. What you want to do is revolutionize role-playing—find a way to teach people how to role-play."

Troy researched how people learn before approaching the project. Editor Tim Brown assisted him with the 64-page rule book. Next, the game went to Jonatha Caspian, an editor with a master's degree in education; her goal was to make sure the instructions were clear and could be easily understood by people unfamiliar with role-playing games.

The boxed set, which retails for about $20.00, also includes "Dragon Cards," 48 cards that teach various aspects of the game.

"They are the heart of the game," explains Bruce Heard, D&D® Game Group Coordinator. "Each Dragon Card teaches a concept. For example, there's a card on "Armor Class" covering nearly everything a Dungeon Master needs to know about the subject—such as types of armor characters can wear." The other side of the card is a solo adventure for the DM that focuses heavily on Armor Class.

"There's one on spells," Heard added. "And it has an adventure with spellcasting." The adventure reinforces what the person learned in the rules section, boosting their overall comprehension of the game, he said.

Heard said while avid gamers are

Continued on page 30

The Living City

Port Of Ravens Bluff

by Lew and Terry Wright

The docks of Ravens Bluff team with adventure, excitement, and intrigue. There is so much for characters to do around The Living City's port that an entire product will be released next month focusing on the area—Port Of Ravens Bluff, LC4.

To stir your interest, we proudly present two port offerings.

The Sunfish

The Sunfish is a three-masted bark typical of the seagoing merchant cargo ship used by E.L.F. & Co. to carry less bulky cargo long distances with good speed. The Sunfish is 150′ long, not including the bowsprit. She is 28′ abeam, and 16 from keel to gunwales. She has two cargo hatches, with two ship's boats on the aft hatch.

The Sunfish and her sister ships are built more for speed than cargo capacity. They are more likely to carry precious cargoes to a few destinations than be tramp traders.

The captain's and officers' quarters are astern, along with the galley. Crew quarters are primarily in the forecastle (at the bow) and in unused portions of the cargo hold. Passenger space is almost non-existent.

The Sunfish class barks have a minimum crew requirement of 25, with a full compliment of 35, as follows:

Captain, first-mate, bo'sun, cook, ship's boy, 20-30 able-bodied seamen.

Armaments vary with the preferences of the captains. Usually, there are two ballistas and a small group of marines to protect the ships against pirates.

In the case of *The Sunfish,* the crew is heavily related. For example, Captain Nimleth has his wife Jori as cook, his son Arthax is bo'sun, another son and daughter are seamen, and his youngest girl is ship's boy. His first mate, Estaban, is a long time friend of Captain Nimleth, and Estaban also has one son and one daughter in the crew.

Captain Nimleth thinks the interdependencies of the "extended family" of his crew boost morale and help the ship run more efficiently. No discord is tolerated, and offenders will soon find themselves looking for other employment. This is true even for blood relatives.

Since E.L.F. & Co. lets each captain run his own ship with very little interference, the arrangements vary with the personal biases of the captains.

There are at least 30 of this class of ship currently in operation. Four, *The Sunfish, The Angelica, The Zephyr,* and *The White Tern,* primarily operate in and around The Dragon Reach.

Some of the other ships are: *The Ki-Rin, The Goodewind, The Cloudrider* and *The Erne.*

Eldritch, Lightfoot, Findrol & Co. Worldwide Import/Export

Eldritch, Lightfoot, Findrol & Co. is the second largest trading company in Ravens Bluff. It was started near the docks by Ardenor Eldritch about 60 years ago. Eldritch was an itinerant merchant dealing mostly in exotic spices and textiles. He had stopped at the natural harbor many times for provisions for his three ships and found the climate very agreeable. On one voyage, he decided to stay and open a trading post, turning his ships over to his son to continue the family business.

Ilistar Lightfoot was also a traveling merchant. However, his business was caravans plying the overland trade routes. He met Eldritch during one of his stopovers at Ravens Bluff, and found himself both liking the old elf and joining him as a business partner. That was about 50 years ago.

Business thrived, and the two built up a fleet of more than two dozen ships and nearly 50 wagons. Then, about 10 years ago, they met Orothan Findrol, another traveling merchant with a specialty in precious gems and wrought metals—and yet another partner was added.

E.L.F.'s Business & Properties

E.L.F. & Co. owns one of the main warehouses in the wharf district. They staff it with company employees, hiring additional part-time workers when business increases. They also rent space to other merchants, however no more that 30% of the space is rented out at any one time. Renters and their agents are provided with identification tags which allow them access to their property in the well-secured facility.

Security for the warehouse is also provided by E.L.F. from a private police force. The City Watch also patrols the area.

E.L.F maintains a couple of private homes and several rooms at various inns for use by their ships' officers and visiting dignitaries.

Ardenor Eldritch

7th Level Male Elf Fighter

STR: 13
INT: 14
WIS: 12
DEX: 18
CON: 12
CHA: 18

AC Normal: 2
AC Rear: 6
Hit Points: 38
Alignment: Lawful Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Orcish, Halfling

Age: 255
Height: 5′ 2″
Weight: 110
Hair/Eyes: Silver/Blue
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword, short bow, net, javelin, dagger (held), dagger (thrown)
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Swimming (13), navigation (12), rope use (18), riding land-based (15), reading/writing (15)

Magic Items: *Ring of protection +2, flying dagger +2, folding boat, alchemy jug, net of snaring, cloak of the manta ray*

Ardenor is usually pleasant, especially when bantering with customers. Occasionally his temper will flare at incompetent help or business setbacks, and then he can swear with the best of the old dockworkers.

However, he prefers to win hard work and loyalty by being a just and equitable employer.

His dress varies, depending on his activity. For visits to the warehouse or his ships, he wears leather armor over

plain breeches, a simple tunic and boots. For more formal situations, he prefers to show off custom tailored outfits made from his finer textiles (as a walking advertisement). He never tries to hide his elven looks or his tan skin that is oddly tinged with green.

Ardenor's family has been seafaring merchants for as far back as they can trace their roots. It is believed that some aquatic elf blood was picked up several generations ago, which is the reason for the strangely hued skin and hair.

The mixed blood may also explain their preference for ships, unusual for elves. In any case, Ardenor was born and raised aboard ship, and worked his way up from cabin boy to first mate before getting a ship of his own.

Along the way, he learned his skill at arms from the mercenaries (marines) aboard his father's ships. In order to conduct business, his father also insisted that Ardenor learn to speak, read, and write the Common tongue.

He had voyaged in every major waterway before deciding to settle down in the Living City.

Ilistar Lightfoot

Male Elf Fighter/Cleric 5th/5th

STR: 12
INT: 14
WIS: 18
DEX: 16
CON: 10
CHA: 16

AC Normal: 1
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 32
Alignment: Neutral Good
Languages: Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Gnoll

Age: 192
Height: 5′ 1″
Weight: 105
Hair/Eyes: Silver/Violet
Weapon Proficiencies: Short sword, short bow, dagger (held), staff
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Animal handling (17), rope use (16), riding land-based (21), reading/writing (15)

Magic Items: *Ring of protection +2, necklace of prayer beads, short sword +2, staff of lightning bolts*
Spells/day: 5 5 2

Ilistar is quiet and more reserved than Ardenor, but he is a pleasant fellow.

He seems to look at everything and nothing at the same time. He likes to wander around the loading areas, checking on the condition of the animals, how well a wagon is packed, and so on. Employees and customers alike soon learn that although Ilistar may seem aloof, he is actually very alert, and he will not tolerate carelessness in his company.

Like Ardenor, his dress varies to suit the environment. When working on the road or at the warehouse, he wears a set of elven chain mail. For more formal situations, he wears his clerical robes with the appropriate symbols of the season.

As a cleric of Sylvanus, Ilistar loves animals, mammals especially, and will not trade in furs or other animal parts which required the killing of a mammal.

He watches over the company's livestock and is quick to correct any person he thinks is mishandling an animal.

Although he is quick to criticize employees, and has been known to fire them if they could not or would not do things his way, he is also kind hearted, and will just as quickly hire a person if he thinks they are down on their luck.

Before meeting Ardenor, Ilistar traveled most of the Vast, plying his trade. Since joining with Ardenor, he now makes only one or two trips a year, preferring to manage the warehouse and letting his Wagonmasters handle the caravans.

Orothan Findrol

Male Elf Fighter/Thief 5th/5th

STR: 12
INT: 12
WIS: 13
DEX: 19
CON: 17
CHA: 16

AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 32
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Languages: Common, Elvish

Age: 134
Height: 4′ 10″
Weight: 95
Hair/Eyes: Gold/Green
Weapon Proficiencies: Short sword, dagger (held), dagger (thrown), short bow, mace
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Appraising (12), rope use (19), riding land-based (16), reading/writing (13), forgery (18)

Magic Items: *Ring of protection +2, rope of climbing, dagger +2, short sword +1, lupe of Cormac**

Thieving Abilities

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
70	55	55	65	45	35	85	15

* New magic item explained at the end of this column.

Orothan is a studious elf and tends to prefer solitude. He has a large library of reference materials covering gems and precious metals, including legendary hoards and artifacts.

He is an immaculate record keeper and does most of the company's accounting and other paperwork. He leaves public relations to Arendor and labor relations to Ilistar.

His manner is sullen, unless he is drawn into talking about ancient and legendary treasures; then he becomes very animated and enthusiastic.

Orothan was born in the Vale of Lost Voices, near Essembra. His natural talents kept him in trouble with the tribal Elders, and he acquired a reputation as a "black sheep." He tended to get even for slights, real and imagined, through his pranks and petty thievery.

Eventually, he left the tribe under clouded circumstances, and after many adventures made his way to Hillsfar. There, and in the areas nearby, he built up his skills as a thief and established his cover as a gem appraiser and trader.

It was during this time that he managed to recover the *lupe of Cormac* from ancient Dwarvish ruins in the Dragonspine Mountains.

One day, when things got too hot for him in Hillsfar, he decided to "go straight," using his wealth and cover to become a traveling merchant in gems and precious metals.

He wandered the area of the Sea of Fallen Stars for a number of years until finally meeting Arendor and Ilistar in the Living City. Their talents and needs coincided, and he chose to settle down. However, he occasionally still takes trips abroad.

New Magic Item

The Lupe of Cormac is a jeweler's eyeglass which acts like a *gem of true seeing*, but only for gem stones. Using it, a person with an appraising skill can determine the exact quality and value of a gem, plus the nature of any inherent magic — including curses.

❑

I Blew Up The Car

The Memoirs of an HQ Coordinator

by Chris Schon

I started the day much like any other day. I sat at my desk sleepy-eyed, sipping my fifth cup of coffee, completely unaware of the ruthless attack on my will which was about to be made. You see, I volunteered to *help* the RPGA™ Network at GEN CON® Game Fair 88 and 89, and because of that I was prone to sudden outbursts around the office and home of "Never again, this was my last year!" and "No, Jean. NO JEAN. NOOOOOOOOO!" These regressions, of course, prompt myriad concerned and frightened looks from my co-workers and family members. I never bother to explain their cause; I simply assure people that the condition will pass by mid June or so. It is all part of a process which I must go through in my efforts to sufficiently gather my will so as to resist Jean and her spells the next time she calls looking for GEN CON Game Fair volunteers. It is a noble, yet futile, endeavor.

The phone rings.

"Brokerage Services, Chris speaking."

I am generally only surprised on a roll of 1 on a d6. It's a 1.

A meek, yet pleasant, voice issues forth from the receiver. "Hi. How are you? This is Jean."

"Hi Jean, good to hear from ya. How did Winter Fantasy go?" I reply, unaware of what was about to happen.

Definitely rolled a 1. Failed my Intelligence check, too.

"It went well. Everyone had fun," she said while gathering her spell components.

"Great! What can I do for ya?" I asked. Natural 20 on my Wisdom check. Darn!

Are you going to GEN CON Game Fair 90?" she posed innocently.

She attacks, simultaneously casting *charm person, hypnosis,* and *dispel common sense.* Of course, her *sphere of inability to utter the word "no" to her* is up and running. It has been determined that she can transmit its area of effect over telephone lines.

"Yes, Jean," I reply blankly, failing all four saving throws miserably.

"Oh good!" she squeals confidently. She prepares to make the final subduing blows.

I sit there silently, awaiting her commands. My only hope is that the spells' durations run out before she can finish me off.

"How would you like to be HQ Coordinator this year at the game fair?" she asks commandingly. She casts *command word obey* just to be sure.

"Yes, Jean," I say blankly. No such luck on the durations. Drat. Another poor gamer falls victim to the will of Jean Rabe.

We say our goodbyes, and as I hang up the phone I fall to the floor trembling from anguish and defeat. This occured several months before last year's convention. I am not sure of the date exactly. I am not sure it ever really happened. I have a theory that the recollection of my saying, "Yes, Jean" was subliminally planted in my brain and that the words never really left my lips. I probably will never know for sure.

Editor's Note: Chris Schon also will be the HQ Coordinator at this coming GEN CON Game Fair 91, August 8-11 at MECCA in Milwaukee, WI. He probably doesn't remember the time that agreement was made, either.

The Arrival

I began my responsibilities the weekend before the game fair. My excitement mounted as my car approached the outskirts of Lake Geneva (my wife was driving, so I was able to watch the scenery). My excitement, I should add, was not a result of looking forward to the upcoming fun and camaraderie of another Game Fair. Rather, it was the anticipation of what was in store for me at my place of residence for the next few days. I, Chris Schon, had been bestowed the honor of being the first guest at the world renown Hotel Skip since the year of the "Ugly Maid" (Name withheld, RPGA Network membership #18958, see POLYHEDRON™ Newszine 31 for more details). As my wife pulled the car into the driveway, and honked to announce our arrival, I was in awe of the sight of Hotel Skip, an apartment above a double garage. Soon after I pulled the keys from the ignition, Skip came down the stairs with wet hair and wearing what I assumed was the customary *bathrobe of greeting* for the region. I whispered a silent prayer of thanks that we had not arrived earlier. (I guessed that he would have been wearing the not so customary *towel of greeting.*) We exchanged greetings and he led us up the staircase to Hotel Skip. At the top I was greeted by Hotel Skip's bellhop, Cyrano the cat. As if sensing my allergies and general dislike of felines, Cyrano began rubbing against my leg, purring. I'm not sure if the cat actually thought I'd pet him, or if he was just trying to annoy me. Although our bellhop was not willing to carry my bags, he was more than happy to shed on them to ensure that my memories would last well beyond the duration of my stay.

As I set foot into the Hotel Skip lobby, that's the kitchen to you and me, I noticed that some serious cleaning had been done. (From what I hear this is something that does not happen very often.) I was impressed. We chatted for a while, then I bid my wife a fond farewell and sent her on her way back to Chicago. (She's not a gamer and was not staying for the convention.)

Hotel Skip

At this point I had been here about half an hour. Cyrano still had not left my side; he was busy trying every means possible to maneuver his way onto my lap. Needless to say, he was failing miserably.

Then the time had come. I could not hold out any longer. I had to see for myself—the question that has been on the minds of RPGA Network members for years now had to be answered. I am sure the "Ugly Maid" has lost many a night's sleep wondering if his work was for naught in his valiant attempts to get rid of it. I casually strolled over to the washroom, desperately needing to know the answer. I opened the door. There it was, the Hotel Skip luxury bathtub. I cautiously walked toward it, peering over the edge into its depths. Yes, there it was. I am pleased to report to the membership that the infamous iron-stain in tub has returned. Obviously it

is true that diamonds are not the only things that are forever.

A few other fine features of the Hotel Skip include: an all-night theater featuring mid-20th Century Dick Tracy movies, dining facilities specializing in microwave popcorn and tea, and a shower designed for midgets and washing below the waist of anyone over 5′ 2″.

The Files

Part of my responsibilities as HQ Coordinator include handling the file cabinets that go in Bruce Hall and contain the Network tournaments and score sheets. So, of course, I wanted to know the files' conditions in advance of the convention, and Cyrano gave me the opening I needed.

Skip finally noticed my continuous sneezing, wheezing, and shortness of breath. He suggested we run over to TSR, claiming he had some work to do and I could investigate the tournament files. Although the thought of parting company with the persistent little furball, who was still trying to breach my defenses and gain access to my lap, pained me so, I agreed immediately and enthusiastically, racing him to his car.

When we entered the RPGA Network offices in TSR I made a bee-line for the cabinets. As I reached them, Skip informed me that with the help of another volunteer, he had personally overseen the creation of this year's filing system. My heart raced, for I knew Skip was capable of creating some fantastic filing systems. As I began to open the drawer, Skip added the footnote that Jean had been in there just a few days earlier and had changed a few things around—he didn't know what she had touched.

My heart sank into my shoes. Jean cannot even spell filing system. Her most effective, most widely-used system consists of piles of stuff. Just piles. Anyone who has seen her office can verify this; it is one big pile. You can lose a mid-sized automobile in them. In fact, I heard a lost volunteer from GEN CON® Game Fair 88 was not found until recently when the RPGA Network moved to a new area of the building. (The story has not been confirmed, but it could have happened.)

Amazingly enough, my filing cabinets were in pretty good shape. Jean must have got distracted before she could do too much damage. I proceeded to make a few minor changes, more as a statement of authority and a declaration of territory than anything else. I closed the last drawer, cast my *protection from everyone 15′ radius* upon them, and was satisfied.

Chris tries to say "NO!"

Bear Drinking

In the morning I awoke. My lungs did not. My throat was burning. I had a coughing attack, and my eyes watered. Contrary to popular belief, I am not always like that in the morning. I soon realized the cause. I spotted the telltale pile of fur on my blanket. Obviously Cyrano had decided I would be a cozy sleeping companion. Skip already had been up, and was looking like he was ready to go. So I leaped out of the bed, showered (the lower half of my body, anyway), dressed, and we were on our way to TSR. In the Network offices things were surprisingly serene for being the Monday before GEN CON Game Fair. Jean had things well in hand, and there was—to my dismay—very few things left to do for the convention. This of course meant that I would be spending the next two days busy working on a barrage of tedious and otherwise trivial tasks. In the absence of any real work (that I wanted to do), I spied the usual contingent of Regional Director volunteers hungrily packaging every morsel of TSR product that wasn't nailed down for distribution at their local conventions. They looked like a group of hungry bears ravaging a garbage dump. The task kept them very busy, and away from stuffing envelopes and doing other useful things.

That day, Jean offered to take the other volunteers and I out to lunch at the local Chinese hot spot. Our party included a friendly, and lucky for me, even-tempered fellow from Australia named Wes. Shortly after we were seated, and had looked at the menu, we were approached by a young oriental girl asking to take our orders. She worked her way around the table busily writing our requests without incident—that is until she reached Wes. Wes made his food selection. However, when she asked him what he would like to drink, he appeared to be stumped. Hoping to expedite the process, the waitress said, "We haaav bear." Wes' face went white with confusion. Being in a country foreign to him, he was aparently unaware that the waitress was saying "beer." Poor Wes frantically searched around the table for support before he embearassed himself. No one appeared to notice his plight except for me. And I just sat there with a smile on my face, seeing a tremendous opportunity for humor at Wes' expense. Frustrated and confused, he finaly admitted that he was not from around here and had no idea what "bear" was. Skip, being the dignitary of the group, quickly ordered him a familiar Chinese brand. I immediatedly added that yes, the various brands of panda were tasty, but that I preferred grizzly myself. Wes simply held his head in defeat as the others

joined in the barrage of bear jokes. The jokes soon subsided as the more polite members realized how upset Wes was getting. Not me, though, I couldn't bear to pass up an opportunity like this. Within moments my opening came when the waitress brought him his drink and a frosted mug. Wes exclaimed, "Oh a frosted mug!" I explained to him the condition of the mug was caused by condensation from the live bears they kept in the refrigerator. Once again the entire table was off and running. Wes' persecution continued for the rest of the con—many other Network members let in on the story came up with some beary good puns, too. At times it seemed as if Wes could bearly stand to go on. But all and all, he was a good sport about it, managing to bear the brunt of the abuse with dignity and class—even when he received a special award the Sunday of the convention—a stuffed bear in a glass mug.

Explosives Expert

The night brought the annual visit to Jean's house for dinner and games. Chef Jean was quite excited as she explained how she had acquired a delicious recipe for a very special dish from Sylvia. My stomach churned as recollections of concrete jello and the great macaroni massacre sprang to mind. Could my digestive system take another one of Jean's well meant, but very lethal meals? Fortunately for myself and the other volunteers, we were running late at TSR that day, and Bruce cooked the Deering family secret recipe—sloppy joe's.

After the feast, we decided to playtest a Paranoia scenario which Wes wrote and that is running at next month's GEN CON Game Fair. I can't tell you too much about it, because that would give away the adventure. However, it provided the good-natured frustration and insanity normally associated with the game. Our characters received some pretty standard stuff—laser pistols, rifles, etc. All of us except Skip's character, that is. He was given a car. A heavily armored recreational vehicle complete with front and rear laser cannons.

My character, a member of the Death Leopards (notorious for blowing up things) knew what had to be done. Skip's character learned how to use this car to its fullest extent. His favorite feature being an ejector seat. My character had to blow up this car. My character placed seven pounds of plastic explosives under the driver's seat, rigged it with a remote control detonator, and waited for Skip's character to give him a reason to set it off. That time soon came when my character was ejected (for no real reason, I might add) from the car. On his way to his falling death, my character hit the button and blew up the car. After the dust cleared, my character was quite dismayed to find that the car didn't have a scratch on it, Skip's character was intact, but the rest of the party was disintigrated. Seven pounds of plastique! Do you know how much that is? I had to complain, rant, rave, and otherwise express my disapproval to Wes, who was running the game. He didn't budge. The conversation in the car with Skip on the way home pretty much amounted to:

"Did too!"
"Did not!"
"Did too!"
Etc.

I insist that car was blown up. And I am putting out a call to the membership to help me on this one. I will not rest until Skip admits that my character blew up the car. I believe that seven pounds of plastic explosives is enough to blow up any car—or building for that matter. Please help me. I need your support. We must band together and vanquish gaming atrocities such as this.

The rest of the week was fairly uneventful. It was filled with the usual trials and tribulations. I ended up becoming friends with Cyrano, although completely against my will. Hmm, could he possibly not be Skip's cat at all, merely Jean's familiar?

I was honored with an opportunity to be a charter member of the Hotel Skip Volunteer Fire Department on Tuesday when we were getting ready to make our next day's jaunt to MECCA. You see, Skip's house caught fire. This happened as we ran back to TSR to pick up a couple of forgotten documents. Upon our return and as we were getting out of the car, we noticed a strange beeping noise. Skip's face went white as he realized it was his smoke alarm. We dashed up the stairs and were greeted by a cloud of smoke. Apparently Skip's toaster oven had been turned on, and the heat started the kitchen table on fire. I began pouring glasses of water on the table (making a mess), while Skip found Cyrano. We carried the smouldering table out of the apartment and took a garden hose to it. My sources tell me the toaster oven has been retired, and the table has been fixed (Skip went to K-mart and bought a tablecloth).

Once we arrived at MECCA, I pulled my usual disappearing act until after the packed file cabinets were hauled into HQ in Bruce Hall. When I finally found my way there, Skip was standing before the file drawers looking quite perplexed. Apparently in the scuffle of loading, one of the file cabinets (for which there was no key) became locked. Skip disappeared "to go looking for tools," leaving me in a state of near-panic. However, using a screwdriver as a chisel and a stapler as a hammer, myself and a few enthusiastic members managed to adapt and overcome the situation. Within minutes we managed to slam, kick, bash, and otherwise manhandle the locking mechanism until it was thoroughly broken, and the drawers no longer could be locked. When Skip finally returned with some tools, he found myself and the other vandals standing there looking victorious with the file drawers open.

After HQ was set up, we headed over to the Wednesday night RPGA™ Network members meeting. The club skit competition was the highlight of the meeting. The ones I saw, and the stories I heard about the ones I missed, convinced me that I should definitely plan to attend the next one—you should, too. Some of the performances included: the membership buying TSR with accumulated fun bucks, a murder, and a group of PCs revolting against their players for arguing and being indecisive. Beyond all that, consensus has it that Wayne Straiton's audition for the Rocky Horror Picture Show was definitely the lingerie highlight of the evening.

The convention itself went surprisingly well. The air conditioning in Bruce Hall actually worked, keeping it a comfortable 12 degrees in HQ for the entire con. But hypothermia was not enough to stop me and my army of volunteers (who do all the real work, I just take the credit). Thanks for all your help, guys. I would especially like to thank Mitzi, without whom I would not have been able to keep HQ running. Don't forget to write Skip about the car.

I hope to see you at this GEN CON® Game Fair. I think I'm going to try giving up resisting Jean. It's just too hard on the system.

P.S. I blew up that car, Skip!

❑

The Living Galaxy

Cruisers and Characters: The Spacecraft Player Character, Part 2

by Roger E. Moore

In the last installment of this column, I suggested game masters of science-fiction role-playing games try campaigns in which one of the player characters is a robotic or cyborg spacecraft. It might be hard to grasp this idea at first. How could anyone role-play a spacecraft? Where would you begin?

Think of it this way: Suppose one of the PCs is a normal character, a human or alien spacecraft pilot who is free to walk around, manipulate objects, talk with people, and so on. But suppose this PC is very paranoid and refuses to leave his spacecraft. Or suppose he is handicapped and is physically unable to leave the ship. He could still move about the ship, checking its systems and crewing the bridge. The pilot could also communicate by radio with any crewmember to offer comments and ideas, and he could use the ship's resources and firepower to support the operations in which the other PCs were involved. From here, it's a short step to seeing how a spacecraft PC would work out.

A word should be said about the spacecraft PC's self image. Take a look at some of the people you meet during the day. Some dress sloppily and don't take good care of themselves; others are very athletic and well groomed. Some people are physically attractive, and some are not. Many people are plain looking but have at least one distinguishing physical characteristic (a muscular build, red hair, odd clothing, a limp, etc.).

When a player creates a spacecraft PC, he or she should consider how the spacecraft looks. Does the ship insist on having its outer hull kept in pristine condition, or has it let its hull become scarred, scorched, and covered with graffiti? Does the ship insist on having the crew or cleaning robots pick up every scrap of litter that hits its decks, or does filth and grime coat the ship's interior? Does the ship save its money (no reason it can't have a bank account and its share of spoils like everyone else) and have its systems upgraded to match state-of-the-art technology, with helpful little widgets purchased on the side, or does it have outdated equipment and a "couldn't care less" attitude? Think of the spacecraft as a physical body, and decide how the ship PC treats itself and allows others to treat it. A litterbug engineer could find himself in a lot of trouble aboard a ship that decides to alter the local gravity or air quality in his cabin in retaliation!

The Spacecraft Player's Role

Running a spacecraft PC can be difficult at times for a player. Can a starship walk into a 10′ × 10′ room? Probably not, so it won't be able to follow the other PCs everywhere they go. But consider the following options to ease the player's burden in fitting into the campaign:

1. One-character option: The player has the spacecraft as his only character, but the campaign is kept centered on adventure settings and scenarios in which the ship can play a vital part in resolving the mission, and can offer help and advice in every gaming session. This option limits the campaign quite a bit. The setting will obviously have to be in deep space, but the overall campaign might include a military, mercantile, or exploratory theme. Since the PCs are almost always in space, the ship can usually take part in the goings-on. If the ship is small enough, it might even take part in planetary landings.

2. Avatar option: The use of a remotely controlled robotic "avatar" for the spacecraft was discussed in issue 60. A roughly man-sized robot (of virtually any shape the GM and players decide upon) could accompany the other PCs on missions into areas where the spacecraft could not go, so long as the ship maintained constant communication with the robot. The robot might be limited in its powers and abilities, but it should be useful to the "live" PCs. Perhaps the robot is actually a small vehicle like a truck or all-terrain vehicle, in which the other PCs can ride and store their belongings while exploring a new world. In any event, the ship player can control both the spacecraft and its robot, so the GM should take steps to ensure the combination is not so powerful as to overwhelm the other PCs in the game.

3. Multiple character option: Here, the player is allowed to run one "normal" character in addition to the starship. As an option to running a regular adventurer, the player could control the ship's mascot, being some sort of semi-intelligent creature that can provide support or amusement for the group. This latter possibility would give the player a double challenge to play a very intelligent character (the ship) and a rather dumb one (the mascot). Try to give the mascot some talents useful the rest of the group.

4. GM-assistant option: In this final option, the ship's player also serves as an assistant to the game master. When not running his ship PC, the player controls one or more of the GM's NPCs, characters that would usually be expected to help the party but would not show up in every adventure. The player could also help run groups of NPCs during mass combat, set up miniatures props, generate wandering monsters, and do anything else that the GM trusts to the player. The player's role as a GM's assistant should be known to all other players.

Grouping The Group

Spacecraft player characters can be used in science-fiction gaming groups of any size. A few suggestions for different group sizes follow:

1. One-on-one: If you have only one player, he or she can run the ship and set off on adventures across space. The ship could be crewed by NPCs controlled by the GM, or it might travel with an assortment of directly controlled robots and unmanned (see this column in issues 54 and 55) with which to accomplish its missions. The ship becomes a free agent, able to choose wherever it goes and select which missions it wants to perform. See the next issue of POLYHEDRON™ Newszine for ideas on creating adventures for spacecraft PCs.

2. Two-on-one: Two players are available: One runs the ship, and the other controls all of the crewmen. This works best when a small adventurer-class ship is used, so the crew's player isn't overwhelmed with characters. Three such PCs might be the limit for one player;

one probably would be better. This latter scenario duplicates the situation in Anne McCaffrey's book, *The Ship Who Sang,* which was discussed in last issue's column. The GM will have to be careful to select and tailor adventures so that both players will be heavily involved; don't let either player become bored and restless with nothing to do!

3. Three or more players: This is simply a normal gaming group in which each player runs a single PC (the ship among them). The variations in the ship player's role mentioned earlier can be applied as the GM and players like.

All this information has been fine so far, but it's been very general, too. Actually putting this information to work in an adventure requires a close look at the games in which this sort of campaign is possible.

Game By Game

The following is an alphabetical list of some major science fiction role-playing games in which you might be able to run spacecraft PCs. I've made an effort to get all of the appropriate information players and GMs would need to set up such a character, with any other comments that I could wrestle out of those who knew more about the games involved than I did. (Special thanks go out to William Connors, Blake Mobley, and Jean Rabe for their assistance.)

BattleTech game (FASA Corporation): You wouldn't think that much could be done with a spacecraft PC in this game, centered as the game is upon the use of BattleMech combat machines. But it might be interesting to have a PC spacecraft assisting with a planetary assault, the other PCs being 'Mech and AeroSpace Fighter pilots, Tech crewmen, and Scouts. The books needed here (aside from the *BattleTech* boxed set) are the *MechWarrior* rule book, the *AeroTech* book, *DropShips and JumpShips,* and the *BattleTech Manual: The Rules of Warfare.*

JumpShips (the game's starships) are monstrous in size, though they have few crew members (maximum of 30 on a *Monolith*-class ship). They don't seem very exciting for PC use as they don't seem to have much to do in adventures.

DropShips, on the other hand, present lots of interesting possibilities because they can bring their 'Mechs right to the battlefield and possibly stay to defend them. DropShips are also able to perform orbital reconnaissance and communication missions to support their 'Mechs. Their major fault is that they cannot leave solar systems on their own, but they can hitch rides with JumpShips for specified fees.

A good adventurer-class DropShip would be one of the *Leopard*-class ships, which can hold a lance of 'Mechs (requiring four 'Mech pilots), two AeroSpace Fighters (requiring two pilots), and a crew of nine. A runway is required for landing this ship, but the GM can arrange for scenarios to have some sort of suitable landing site; MechWarriors wouldn't fight on a planet where they couldn't land. The *Union*-class DropShip would also work well here, with 14 crewmen, 12 'Mechs and pilots, and two AeroSpace Fighters and pilots. (Best of all, the *Union*-class DropShip can land almost anywhere.) The book *DropShips and JumpShips* offers other possibilities, many larger than the above ships.

The *MechWarrior* rule book notes on page 50 ("Robotics") that few robots in this game universe are capable of independent thought; the technology to produce them has been lost due to war. A computer-run ship would be a rare treasure, probably sought by many forces if word of its existence got out. Because there are few if any details on computers in this game, it might be easier to have the ship be a cyborg with the Piloting/AeroSpace, Engineering, ShipBoard Operations, AeroSpace Tactics, and Gunnery/AeroSpace skills, at least. New inborn abilities might be granted to the PC (friends, foes, sixth sense, unique spacecraft parts, etc.). The assistance of other PCs or NPCs would be required to run the ship, making for a tight crew and a proper atmosphere of working together. Specific capabilities of spacecraft in this game universe may be inferred from the many notes on 'Mech capabilities, such as the section on 'Mech components, starting on page 63 of the *MechWarrior* book.

BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ game (TSR, Inc.): Artificial intelligences are an integral part of the XXVc universe. Sentient computer programs, called "digital personalities," are usually found living in the enormous crystalline computer complexes of the inhabited planets of the Solar System: Earth, Mars, Venus, Mercury, the Moon, etc. Intelligent computers can control large spacecraft, too. Note that there are no starships in this game. However, in the XXVc boxed set, it says digital personalities (DPs) can only be NPCs; details on them are given in the *Characters & Combat* book, pages 88-90, and *The World Book,* page 41. Note the interesting ways in which the mechanics of running DPs fit into the framework of the AD&D® game system, upon which the XXVc game is based.

All is not lost. Look for the *Technical Compendium,* a game supplement to be released in August, which will describe DPs as player characters in their own computer worlds. It might be possible to design a DP that can operate a spacecraft used by the other PCs.

And there is always the possibility of running a cyborg spacecraft. If the world of the 25th Century can genetically engineer new races of humanity, it can also produce cyborgs and connect them to spaceships as pilots.

Speaking of spacecraft, small to medium cruisers and freighters seem to be about the right size for a spacecraft PC, most fitting within the adventurer-and campaign-class categories. Players have the chance to design their own ships and deck plans to fit their specific gaming needs.

GURPS Space game (Steve Jackson Games): Pages 51-52 of the rule book (the section describing computers) apparently allow for running sentient computers as PCs. The *GURPS Space* game also has a flexible system for designing spacecraft, and in theory you could design a ship of virtually any size, with as complex a computer system as you like. The *GURPS Ultra-Tech* book might provide even more ideas for smart-spacecraft gaming. With the proper equipment, a computer or cyborg PC can probably do as it pleases.

MegaTraveller game (GDW): In addition to all the material given in the *Traveller* game section that follows (especially Book 8 *Robots),* referees should pick up a copy of Digest Group Publications' *Starship Operator's Manual, Volume 1.* An enormous amount of material is presented in that book on the design and functions of a starship and its subsystems, making it essential reading for anyone with a spacecraft character. Even people using other game systems would benefit from the wealth of data and ideas this book offers. The computer section on pages 23-26 describes intelligent synaptic spacecraft computers, which sadly tend to go insane or make bad judgment calls as they become more complex.

Star Trek: The RPG (FASA Corporation): As mentioned in last issue's column, there is a precedent for putting

an intelligent computer aboard a major spacecraft in the *Star Trek* game, though such devices are apparently extremely rare in Captain Kirk's time (and subject to awful difficulties). The M-5 Multitronic computer was able to pilot the U.S.S. *Enterprise,* perform scans, fire the ship's weapons, raise its shields, and navigate—and it did its job very well until it went crazy. One assumes that thinking computers are therefore very, very rare in this game universe. Because of the humanistic tone of the *Star Trek* world, it is unlikely a cyborg-run ship would be legal or appreciated, but it is possible.

Another problem here is that a *Star Trek* starship like the U.S.S. *Enterprise* is a megacampaign-class ship, and as a PC it would easily overpower the usefulness of the regular PCs. The game's rule book, on page 96, notes in passing the central computer on a ship like the *Enterprise* is tied to library computer banks containing the sum total of knowledge of the Federation. The only way for the ship PC to utilize this information is for the player to also be the game's GM—which defeats the attempt to make the ship a PC. The starship and the regular PCs operate on two entirely different scales of reference, and there are few ways for that gap to be comfortably bridged.

Nonetheless, some ways have already been noted in which a player could run a supership in a game campaign, at least on a limited basis. Establishing the ship's limitations and finding ways to have ship and crew work together on common goals must be done by the GM and all the players in the campaign.

Star Wars: The RPG (West End Games): This system allows for intelligent spacecraft, if you ignore the comment on page 82 of the main rule book that though a ship's computer could act as an autopilot, thus controlling the motions of its ship, it would still not be considered a Droid character. Read the sections on Droids (pages 82-84) and starships (pages 54-65), then start experimenting. Adventurer-class starships are strongly recommended in this game system, based as it is on individual personalities; the stock light freighter and its *Millennium Falcon* version, described on page 56 of the rule book, are excellent. The comic-relief aspect of Droids in this game can be played up to no end, and the possibilities of a smart-alec, paranoid, overconfident, or cowardly starship should fire the imagination of any GM. Have fun!

Traveller game (GDW): Because this system was updated to become the *MegaTraveller* game a few years ago, you may have trouble finding the supplements you'll need for creating a starship PC (but you probably know that already). If you are patient you should able to acquire the basics.

First, if you want to play a robot starship, you must get a copy of Book 8 *Robots,* which has so much useful information you could probably steal a hundred ideas from it for developing computer or robot PCs for any science fiction system. Every aspect of robotic history, encounters, and design in the *Traveller* game is covered, including a short section on how you can run a robotic or computer PC. Details on computer programs are well handled.

To create your PC ship, you might also need some of the books on various starships available in the game, such as Book 2 *Starships,* Book 5 *High Guard,* Supplement 7 *Traders and Gunboats,* and Adventure 6 *Expedition to Zhodane,* which describes a small asteroid starship. The best adventurer-class ship size is 600 tons or less, with a crew size of up to a dozen. Many *Traveller* adventures, supplements, and magazine articles produced by GDW and a host of other companies detailed small starships suitable for such use.

Those who want a campaign-class starship should consider the 1,800-ton *Leviathan* (from Adventure 4 *Leviathan),* a merchant starship with a crew of 56. The adventure booklet offers lots of ship details and scenario ideas. Adventure 1 *The Kinunir,* involves a 1,250-ton military starship piloted by an experimental intelligent computer that went insane and killed its crew. Later versions of that model could have been built with more successful results, and such a ship might be suitable for a military campaign. The *Kinunir* had a crew of 45 and could carry 35 Marines. Military campaigns might also consider using the mercenary cruiser *Broadsword* (from Adventure 7 *Broadsword),* which has a ship's crew of 17 and capacity for 31 soldiers.

For those who want a megacampaign-class ship as a PC, GDW's out-of-print *Azhanti High Lightning* boxed set is strongly recommended; it has lots of deck plans, two rule booklets, and adventuring ideas. Up to 620 people, including crewmen, soldiers, and passengers, can be carried on some ships of this class, though fewer are required for nonmilitary versions (see the example of the merchant ship *Emissary).* Supplement 9 *Fighting Ships* offers lots of other ship types to choose from, though most are of the megacampaign class and lack sufficient detail to be used as PC ships. FASA Corporation once produced plans for a *Traveller* game passenger liner, the *King Richard,* which had a crew of 182 and room for 300 passengers. The booklet that came with the deck plans (*Action Aboard: Adventures on the King Richard)* is rich with spacecraft-based adventuring ideas.

In all cases, custom-built computer systems might not fit into standard spacecraft types without the use of Books 2 and 5, which cover starship construction in detail. Just juggle ship statistics to get what you want.

2300 AD game (GDW): The background given for this game universe would seem to rule out having intelligent computers for small spacecraft, so any PC spacecraft will have to be in the campaign class. One of the most advanced computer systems in this universe is Aristotle (a.k.a. "Ace"), the main computer of the giant exploration starship *Bayern* (from page 20 of the module of the same name). Aristotle is basically a brilliant servant with a bland personality and no creative thought patterns— "certainly no substitute for human companionship." But there is no reason that some event or programming might push Aristotle into true self awareness.

For skills and programming, Aristotle is noted to have the equivalent of level 3 in any skill appropriate to the running of the *Bayern.* The exact skills included must be decided by the referee and player; obviously, "Ace" will have no level for skills like Melee, First Aid, or Computer, though it would have access to lots of raw data.

A campaign using the *Bayern*'s crew as PCs (the ship can carry up to 110 people) might benefit from having someone also role-play the computer as well. What would Aristotle make of the Pleiades anomaly? What would the computer suggest in order to solve the mystery? And how will the crew react to having a machine run their ship?

The next edition of *The Living Galaxy* offers more thoughts on player character spacecrafts, with a host of adventure ideas.

❑

Into The Dark

"Run, you fools, run!"

by James Lowder

The above quote, taken from the *Field Manual of the Theron Marks Society* (the mythical organization of Cthulhu hunters), very accurately sums up the proper way to face most monsters from Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos. The same quote also applies to some film adaptations of Lovecraft's work.

Over the years, Lovecraft's stories have been an oft-visited mine for screenplays. The television series *Night Gallery* presented two of his tales during its run—"Pickman's Model" and "Cool Air." Roger Corman used *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* as the basis for his 1963 film, *The Haunted Palace* (the movie was marketed as part of Corman's Poe cycle). And Michael Weldon's excellent *Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film* notes that the 1968 Boris Karloff film *The Crimson Cult* is a pathetic version of "The Dreams in the Witch-House."

You can't get any better	*****
Entertaining and enjoyable	****
There are worse films	***
Wait for cable	**
A waste of good tape	*

DIE, MONSTER, DIE

1965, 80 Minutes
American International/HBO
Director: Daniel Haller
Starring: Boris Karloff,
Nick Adams, Suzan Farmer
****1/2**

Karloff did a lot of work for American International toward his career's end. All of the films traded off the star's good reputation with horror fans, and many of them—like *The Terror* and *Ghost in the Invisible Bikini*—are almost impossible to sit through. *Die, Monster, Die* actually has some things to recommend it, but mostly in the first half of the movie.

Based on "The Color Out of Space," *Die, Monster, Die* is filled with the trappings of traditional Gothic horror: creaking doors, suits of rusty armor, and mist-covered moors. On the Cthulhu front, the story has strange, mutated people and a brief cameo by a tentacled monster.

As the film opens, we arrive in Arkham with the hero, Stephen Reinhart (played woodenly by Nick Adams). He wants a ride to the Witley place outside of town, but the frightened villagers won't help him. But, wait. The townsfolk have odd accents, and it's not because they pronounce "car" like "cah." That's because Haller set the film in Arkham, *England*, not Massachusetts. I suppose no one would have believed the manor house occupied by the Witleys was part of sixties America.

Neither would it seem plausible that the house would be lit by candles. The same could be said for England, though, so the change in locale needlessly costs the film much of the spirit of the original tale.

In any case, the villagers are afraid of the Witleys because one of their ancestors was a loon and practiced witchcraft. Nahum Witley (Boris Karloff), the current, wheelchair-ridden head of the household, wants nothing to do with the superstitious louts anyway. Our hero is trying to get to the house to visit his girl (Suzan Farmer), and he won't be stopped by provincial feuds. He hikes to the manor, which he finds surrounded by a blasted landscape of dying trees and misty moors. Once at the Witley place, Reinhart discovers that something odd is happening. The lady of the house is bed-ridden with some bizarre illness, and a strange woman in black is haunting the moors.

The mystery surrounding Lady Witley's illness, the maid's disappearance, and the death of another servant is compelling for forty minutes or so. This is largely due to Karloff's good performance as Nahum. He convinces the audience that the secret in the house's locked rooms is so terrifying that it's worth sitting through the tedious scenes between Nick Adams and Suzan Farmer.

Alas, it isn't.

In the second half of *Die, Monster, Die*, it's clear that Haller has fallen asleep in the director's chair. After setting up the mystery, he propels the film to its climax with unbelievably cheap horror movie cliches like skeletons in closets and bats swooping out of nowhere. The Cthulhu mythos is referred to only tangentially in a book, *Cult of the Outer Ones*, that the hero stumbles across. Even so, Haller decides to explain the mythos away as witchcraft.

Nice try, I suppose, but *Die, Monster, Die* will make you yawn repeatedly, especially when Karloff is off-screen.

THE DUNWICH HORROR

1969, 87 Minutes
American International/Embassy
Director: Daniel Haller
Starring: Dean Stockwell,
Sandra Dee, Ed Begley
***1/2**

You should rent this movie only if you're a die-hard, must see everything vaguely Lovecraftian sort of person. After "The Color Out of Space," Haller thought he'd try filming one of Lovecraft's most popular tales. The resulting eighty-odd minutes of celluloid are almost certain to put you into a coma.

Dean Stockwell mumbles his way through the part of Wilbur Whately, a mysterious young man who badly wants to borrow Arkham University's copy of the *Necronomicon* so he can summon Yog-Sothoth. As bubble-headed co-ed Nancy, Sandra Dee acts bemused as she falls for Wilbur, but the romance can't last. Wilbur wants to use her as a sacrifice. Only Professor Armitage, played with skill by Ed Begley, seems at all believable in his part. Begley's no Karloff, however, so Haller's film isn't saved by his solid performance as the man trying to stop Wilbur from calling the Elder Gods.

Like *Die, Monster, Die* before it, *The Dunwich Horror* contains Cthulhu mythos material bogged down in lots of bogus witchcraft trappings. The scenes at the Devil's Hopyard, where Wilbur has Nancy writhing on the altar as he summons his dad, are particularly silly.

A few things in the movie work, and foremost among them is the depiction of Wilbur's monstrous, thousand-tentacled brother. Haller, who was once an art director for American International, uses color filters and flashes of light to show the creature, but also to hide its artificiality. This works surprisingly well. Sandra Dee's drug-induced visions (remember, it's a sixties film) aren't nearly as effective, especially since the scenes resemble nothing so much as a Halloween party filmed through a lens smeared with Crisco.

THE UNNAMABLE

1988, 87 Minutes
Yankee Classic/Vidmark Entertainment
Director: Jean-Paul Oullette
Starring: Charles King,
Mark Kinsey Stephanson,
Alexandra Durrell
1/2

This is an excrutiatingly poor film. Vidmark should really have renamed it "The Unwatchable" for video release; it comes pretty close to being just that.

Lovecraft's very short piece upon which this mess is based is a clever bit about two people sitting in a graveyard, discussing a local haunted house legend and the nature of horror. Randolph Carter, author of weird tales, posits that some things are just too horrible for clear description. Words fail when forced to describe creatures and ideas beyond man's limited reason. His adversary, Joel Manton, scoffs at this, holding that rational thought can resolve all mysteries. Suffice it to say that, by the end of the short story, Manton has changed his mind.

When you get right down to it, *The Unnamable* comes closest of the films reviewed this month to using the entirety of the story upon which it's based. Oullette does show a scene with Carter and Manton (along with a new character, Howard Damon) in a graveyard, discussing a local legend. The short story runs short of ten pages, though, so he had to pad the story a lot to get a feature-length movie.

What we end up with is a dumb yarn about vacuous yuppie college kids daring each other to spend a night in the haunted house. Worse, a couple of frat boys take their dates to the house, too. For an hour, various people creep around with candles, waiting to be separated from their friends so they can be graphically separated from vital body parts by the monster.

The acting is dreadful and the characters mostly unlikeable, so you'll find yourself cheering for the creature by the film's end—if you watch it all the way through.

The monster itself is well designed, and when it stands still, it looks pretty good. Whenever the creature moves, however, it looks like someone in a ratty rubber leotard. The fact that we ever see the monster completely defeats Lovecraft's premise about the unnamable; if it has a specific, recognizable form, it just isn't that scary.

If you are ever tempted to rent this film, remember the words of Theron Marks quoted at the start of this column.

RE-ANIMATOR

1985, 86 Minutes
Empire/Vestron
Director: Stuart Gordon
Starring: Jeffrey Combs,
Barbara Crampton, Bruce Abbott
******1/2**

"Herbert West has a very good head on his shoulders—and another one in a dish on his desk!" That box copy alone makes *Re-Animator* worth a look. The film is quite good, too.

Based very, very loosely upon the minor Lovecraft story, "Herbert West: Re-Animator," this gem is an experiment in excess. Mad doctor-in-training Herbert West has discovered a serum that brings the dead back to life. The re-animated corpses aren't exactly happy about returning to the mortal coil, but that doesn't matter to Herbert. All he wants to do is conquer death.

But things aren't so simple on the cutting edge of science, especially at the Miskatonic University medical school. One of Herbert's professors, Dr. Hill, wants the re-animation formula so he can claim it as his own. Killing the plagiarist (and subsequently bringing him back to life) only makes matters worse.

The conflict between Herbert West and Dr. Hill is resolved, but not before headless corpses start wandering about, a bedraggled cat is killed and brought back to life a number of times, and the dean's clothesless daughter is strapped to a table and menaced by the living dead (that got your attention, didn't it?). After each gruesome plot twist, you'll find yourself saying, "OK, but they won't do anything more bizarre than that." You'll almost certainly be wrong every time.

Obviously, this film isn't for everyone. Though *Re-Animator* has its tongue planted firmly in its cheek, the violence and gore is extreme, as is the rather, er, *odd* sexual content. Jeffrey Combs is great as Herbert West. The use of lighting and sound is superb (even if the soundtrack is a shameless rip-off of *Psycho*). Sure, there are a few holes in the plot, but you won't catch them until you view the film for the fourth time; the other three times, you'll be too amazed to notice.

FROM BEYOND

1986, 85 Minutes
Empire/Vestron
Director: Stuart Gordon
Starring: Jeffrey Combs,
Barbara Crampton, Ken Foree
****

Just when you thought it was safe to uncover your eyes after *Re-Animator*, director Stuart Gordon tosses another live grenade of a film at you. This one is based on another minor Lovecraft tale, too, and is almost as gory and surprising as his previous outing.

Edward Pretorius is conducting an interesting experiment at 666 Benevolent Street in Arkham; he has built a resonator that stimulates the pineal gland and allows humans to see into a parallel dimension. The problem is, the things in that dimension can see back, too. The resonator also tends to do funny things to your sex drive.

After one of those "things" catches a glimpse of Pretorius, it makes a snack of his head, sending the doctor's assistant (Jeffrey Combs again) screaming into the night. The local asylum locks poor Crawford up as a loonie and changes him with murder—though they can't find his mentor's head. Enter wonder girl psychologist Barbara Crampton, who takes Crawford back to the Pretorius house to recreate the experiment and prove him sane.

Big mistake.

Like *Re-Animator*, this film plays fast and loose with Lovecraft.
From Beyond's sexual content alone would make old H. P. spin in his moldy grave. And as in Gordon's earlier work, shock—tempered by a whopping dose of black humor—is the main goal.

As always, Jeffrey Combs is wonderful as Crawford, and Gordon-regular Barbara Crampton plays the repressed psychologist with flair. Ken Foree of *Dawn of the Dead* fame is a welcome addition to the Gordon Troupe as an ex-football star turned cop (who also serves as the film's voice of reason). Together the cast helps to make the sometimes disjointed plot work. Even they can't prevent *From Beyond* from bogging down about an hour into the story, when poor Crawford finally succumbs to the resonator's power and becomes a brain-munching monster. Even with this serious flaw, the film is well worth the few bucks it'll cost you to rent it.

Stuart Gordon is currenctly finishing up a version of "The Pit and the Pendulum." I can hardly wait.

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Continued from page 19

likely to buy the new D&D® game set to have a complete collection or to replace their worn books, they are not the targeted consumers for the game.

"The game is meant to be a good way to get new gamers into role playing. It should bring a large quantity of new gamers in," he said.

Denning added, "Experienced gamers won't get anything they don't already have, except for a very complete DM's screen. However, the game will increase the number of players they can recruit."

Heard said unlike the original game, players and Dungeon Masters do not need to read all the rules before starting to play. By reading sections on "what is role-playing," "what is a character," and going through several of the Dragon Cards, a new DM is ready to call in some friends and host a gaming session, he said.

Troy said the Dragon Cards fit into a compartment in the game's three-panel DM screen. After a DM has familiarized himself with all the Dragon Cards and knows the game, he or she now relies on the rule book, the game's reference tool. The DM puts the cards away and can now use the screen's compartment for maps and adventure notes.

The book contains the rules in detail, spells, monsters, and other aspects of the game. It covers handling characters up to fifth level, and concentrates on "dungeon" adventures.

Denning said even the maps help to teach DMs and players the rules. "Each time you go to a room, you learn a new concept." Players can illustrate moving their characters about the dungeon with full-color counters, he said, adding the DM also has monster counters to represent what the group comes up against.

"We're putting together some new adventures specifically aimed at the new game. People also can use any of the basic modules out now, but they might have a problem if they buy an old module with a wilderness setting. The game has no mechanics for dealing with the wilderness."

Heard explained that future releases will cover taking characters up to higher levels and handle wilderness and other adventures.

For example, Heard said, the D&D game Cyclopedia, available in November, will be a 300-plus page hardbound—the largest hardbound TSR has produced. "It's packed with information. We had to drop the type size to fit everything in."

It includes rules covered in the previous boxed-set editions of the Basic, Expert, and Masters, he said. "We didn't change any of the rules. We fixed the contradictory rules, and we provided new rules that covered areas not previously handled—swimming rules, movement. Besides that, we're providing a lot of optional material, like a skill system drawn from the Gazetteers. And there's an optional system for creating new character classes."

The Cyclopedia, which Heard says he is very excited about, also includes a complete atlas of the known D&D game world and the Hollow World, with full-color map plates.

"One of the objects of the Cyclopedia is to grab people from the boxed set and get them into this so they are playing the full-fledged game." He added it explains the differences between the D&D game and the AD&D® game and how to go from one game to the other. However, he said the Cyclopedia does not teach the D&D game; players need the new boxed set for that.

"The Cyclopedia is for the serious gamer. It's not made for mom, dad, and the kids. It's hard-core role-playing. It's one step from the AD&D game only because it is a simpler product. The AD&D game so far has been a lot more rules oriented. With the D&D game we're trying to be faster and looser, with fewer rules."

However, it also covers a few optional rules the AD&D game has never addressed. "It has rules for handling different things, such as how to figure out how much it would cost to build armor for a dragon or a griffon... how to use unconventional monsters as PCs or as steeds."

Heard, who has overseen the production of the line of D&D game Gazetteers and Hollow World products, said the DUNGEON & DRAGONS® game had become too unwieldy because there were too many source books and boxes. Through the years four boxed sets had been offered—Basic, Expert, Masters, and Immortals. Now, all the players need is the new Basic game, and the Cyclopedia if they want to take the game further, he said.

Next year there is another D&D game boxed set planned, but gamers will not *need* it to keep playing, Heard emphasized. "It will be an Immortals boxed set, called *Wrath Of The Immortals.* It will be 128 pages of campaign events, things that can happen, how to use immortals as NPCs. There will be an element of the book on how to use immortals as player characters, but it's not the focus."

In addition, there will be adventures for various level characters. "The campaign section in *Immortals* will be broken down into three blocks. There's a saga for basic-level characters who can effect the immortals' war. There's a mid-level adventure. And there's a high-level adventure for rulers and kings if people want to role-play that kind of stuff. The sagas are spread out over decades. It's a new, broad campaign. It effects everything to the Hollow World. I can't reveal the outcome of the adventures. That's like revealing the end of a movie. But it will cause some changes in the world," Heard teased.

To further support the D&D® game line, Heard explained one D&D game "almanac" will be released each year. The almanacs are 250-page paperback books that include general information on the D&D game world, geographical and astronomical topics, and events—all of which can be used by DMs in their campaigns.

Heard believes the new D&D game, with all of its support products, will make the game stronger and better than before. "It's not like the AD&D 2nd Edition game," he said. "We're not making umpteen versions of the game. It's the same game. But I can't think of anything that is as focused on teaching people how to role-play."

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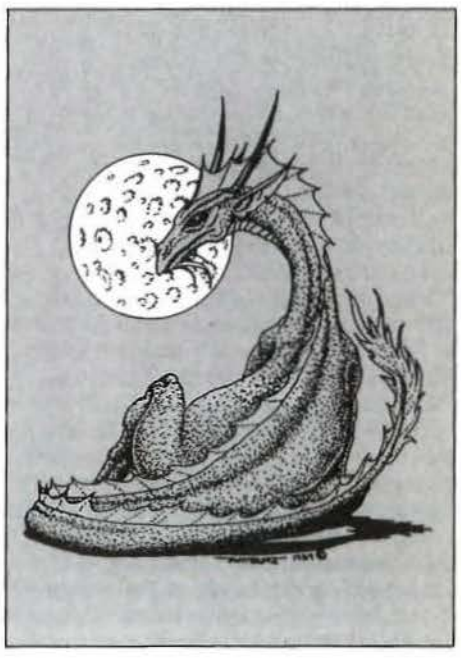


Conventions

QuinCon VI, July 12-14 *Quincy, IL*
The Rodeway Inn at 300 Gardener Expressway in Quincy is the site for this event. Featured activities include Network tournaments and a special memorial tournament with all proceeds going to the Hemophilia Fund. Admission rates are $12 for the weekend or $5 a day. For information, please send a SASE to: QuinCon VI, 3632 Maine Street, Quincy, IL 62301 or call 217-223-8498 12 to 8 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and say you want to know about QuinCon.

Dragon Con '91, July 12-14 *Atlanta, GA*
Guests for this event include Piers Anthony, L. Sprague and Catherine de Camp, and several other authors and artists. More than 100 tournaments include feature-and masters-level Network events, plus role playing, strategic, miniature, and computer gaming activities, and a 24-hour open gaming area. Programming includes four tracks of panels and demonstrations, a writer's workshop, a costume contest with a $1,000 cash prize (please write for details), an art show and print shop, a video room, auctions, and more. Preregistration is $26 through June 15th. For more information send a SASE to Dragon Con, Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362 or call 404-925-2813. You can purchase advance memberships by credit card by calling Ticketmaster at 404-249-6400.

Cangames '91, August 2-5 *Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*
Spend an eventful weekend in Canada's capital. Canada's longest-running game convention is being held this year at the Skyline Hotel in downtown Ottawa. Features include role playing games, board games, miniatures battles, an auction, and a dealers area. Preregistration for the weekend is $20.00, $30.00 at the door. For information, please write: Cangames 91, Box 3358, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 6H8.

GEN CON® 24 Game Fair, August 8-11 *Milwaukee, WI*
The world's oldest and largest gaming convention once again will be held at the MECCA convention center. More than 1,000 games and seminars covering every type of gaming are being planned for this immense event. Network attractions include three dozen tournaments, a host of game demonstrations and seminars, a Wednesday-night members' meeting, Saturday breakfast and Gamers Choice awards ceremony, a costume contest, and an art show. Other events include a huge auction and a miniatures painting competition. For more information or preregistration forms write: GEN CON Game Fair HQ, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

DrakCon 91, August 24-25 *Aberdeen, Scotland*
This game convention to aid famine relief will be held at the Northern College of Education. Events will be announced later, but the schedule will include a Network AD&D® game tournament and a miniatures painting contest. Registration for the weekend is £5, £3.5 for gamers under 16. Single-day registration fees are £3 and £2 respectively. Bed and breakfast accommodations are available through the convention for £13 a night. For more information contact: Sandy Douglas, 13 Springbank Terrace, Aberdeen, Scotland AB1 2LS.

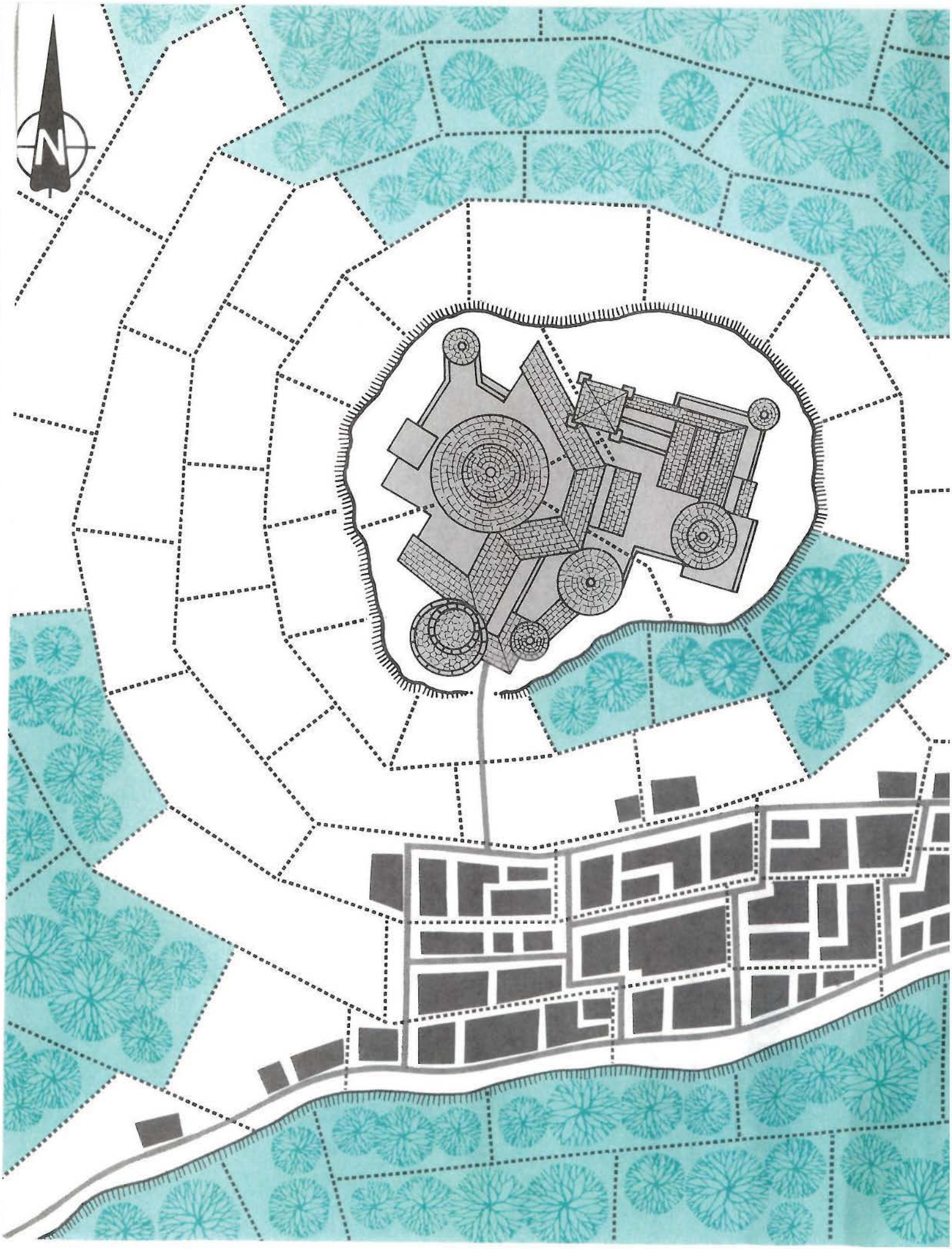
Network Blowout in the Works

Long-time fans of the GEN CON Game Fair know the RPGA™ Network takes special pride in the programming it presents there. This year, however, the Network plans to outdo itself with a record 36 tournaments and a horde of special events. The action begins Wednesday night, August 7th, with the annual members' meeting. Once again, Network clubs will pull out all the stops in the annual games decathlon skit competition. Sit back and enjoy as each club strains to present a skit that is more entertaining and original than the others. The Network staff anticipates even more outrageously funny shenanigans than last year, when members were treated to slapstick comedy, bizarre costumes, and eccentric dialogue.

During the convention, travel-minded gamers who are 18 or older can vie for a trip to European GEN CON game fair, which will be held in England in November, 1991. Contestants must enter the Network's AD&D game Benefit tournament for the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin and the Network AD&D game Feature tournament. All contestants who win their sessions of the Benefit will compare their aggregate scores from all three rounds of the Feature tournament. The qualifying Benefit winner with the highest aggregate Feature score wins the trip.

Other Network highlights include the annual Network breakfast and Gamers' Choice Awards ceremony on Friday, August 9th.

WOLFF & BYRD
COUNSELORS OF THE MACABRE
by Batton Lash
THIS IS ALANNA WOLFF AND JEFF BYRD IN THEIR MILIEU: ATTORNEYS SPECIALIZING IN SUPERNATURAL LITIGATION -- REPRESENTING A NOCTURNAL PARTY...
...BUT OCCASIONALLY, THE COUNSELORS WILL FIND THEMSELVES REPRESENTED AT AN ALL-NIGHT PARTY PARTY PARTY!
I'M GLAD YOU AND YOUR PARTNER COULD MAKE IT, ALANNA! MAVIS SAYS A LOT OF YOUR CLIENTS DROP BY AT THE WISHING HOUR!
WE CAME RIGHT AFTER WORK, IVY--AND THAT'S WITCHING HOUR!
IT WAS A FASCINATING CASE--A MEDUSA WAS THE DEFENDANT WITH A DRUG CHARGE--AND THE PLAINTIFF SHOWS UP STONED!
Er... WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS?
HOUSE of BATT
I NEED A DRINK
WHATEVER. HAVE YOU HAD THE QUESADILLAS? THERE'S TORTELLINI, FRAJITAS, BOCCONCINI - I BETTER SEE YOU EATING--YOU'RE TOO THIN!
I WON'T BE, IVY--WITH A CATERER AS A NEIGHBOR!
I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MUCH FOOD AT A HOUSEWARMING PARTY BEFORE
I HAD A JOB TODAY AT A NEW AGE SEMINAR AND MOST OF THE FOOD WENT UNTOUCHED BECAUSE A LOT OF PREVIOUS LIVES WERE STILL DIETING! I NEVER LET ANYTHING GO TO WASTE, SO,...
YEOW! MAVIS, TAKE THIS! I'VE GOT TO SERVE THE CHICKEN PATÉ
I LIKE YOUR FRIEND, MAVIS--A LITTLE ON THE SUBDUED SIDE, THOUGH
THANKS FOR RECOMMENDING THIS APARTMENT TO IVY, MS. WOLFF--SHE REALLY APPRECIATES IT
YOU SAID YOU HAD A FRIEND LOOKING FOR A PLACE--AND THIS SPACE WAS VACANT FOR MONTHS... BY THE WAY, WHY DID IVY LEAVE HER OLD APARTMENT?
NEIGHBORS COMPLAINED TOO MUCH ABOUT THE NOISE
GREAT
SO HOW DO YOU KNOW IVY?
I DON'T--MY PARTNER LIVES NEXT DOOR AND MAVIS IS OUR SECRETARY...
OOOH, THE LAWYERS! MAVIS TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR FIRM! I SHOULD'VE KNOWN! I'VE SEEN YOU ON THE NEWS! YOUR JOB MUST BE SOOOOO EXCITING! TELL ME ABOUT IT!
WELLL... IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW...
YOU!
COME WITH ME!
© 1991 BATTON LASH
BUT--
BUT--
BUT--
I WANT YOU TO MEET SOMEONE I MET AT THE SEMINAR TODAY--BESIDES, YOU SHOULD MINGLE WITH THE GUESTS!
...SAY WHAT YOU WANT ABOUT THE EIGHTIES, BUT THAT'S WHEN MOUSSE CAME INTO ITS OWN
Uh-huh...
Y'KNOW, WE'RE PROBABLY THE OLDEST ONES HERE...
THANKS FOR REMINDING ME
YOU SHOULD KNOW I HAVE PSYCHIC ABILITIES... ELVIS HAS COME TO ME
RIGHT. EXCUSE ME...
ANOTHER ROUND, BYRD? GUESS YOU'VE BEEN TALKING TO SOME OF THE GUESTS, TOO...!
AH, YOU KNOW HOW IT IS AT PARTIES ONCE THE WORD'S OUT YOU'RE AN ATTORNEY...
JUST ONE MORE QUESTION...
...IF MY HOST BODY GETS A DISPOSSESSED NOTICE WHAT HAPPENS TO ME?
Sigh THAT DEPENDS. IF YOU'RE SERVED A NOTICE OF PETITION, YOU MUST ANSWER. NOW IF THE PETITIONER SAYS...
...AND I CAN HAVE OUT OF THE BODY EXPERIENCES
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I WANT TO BELIEVE THAT...
HEY! TURN THE MUSIC UP! I CAN STILL HEAR MYSELF THINK!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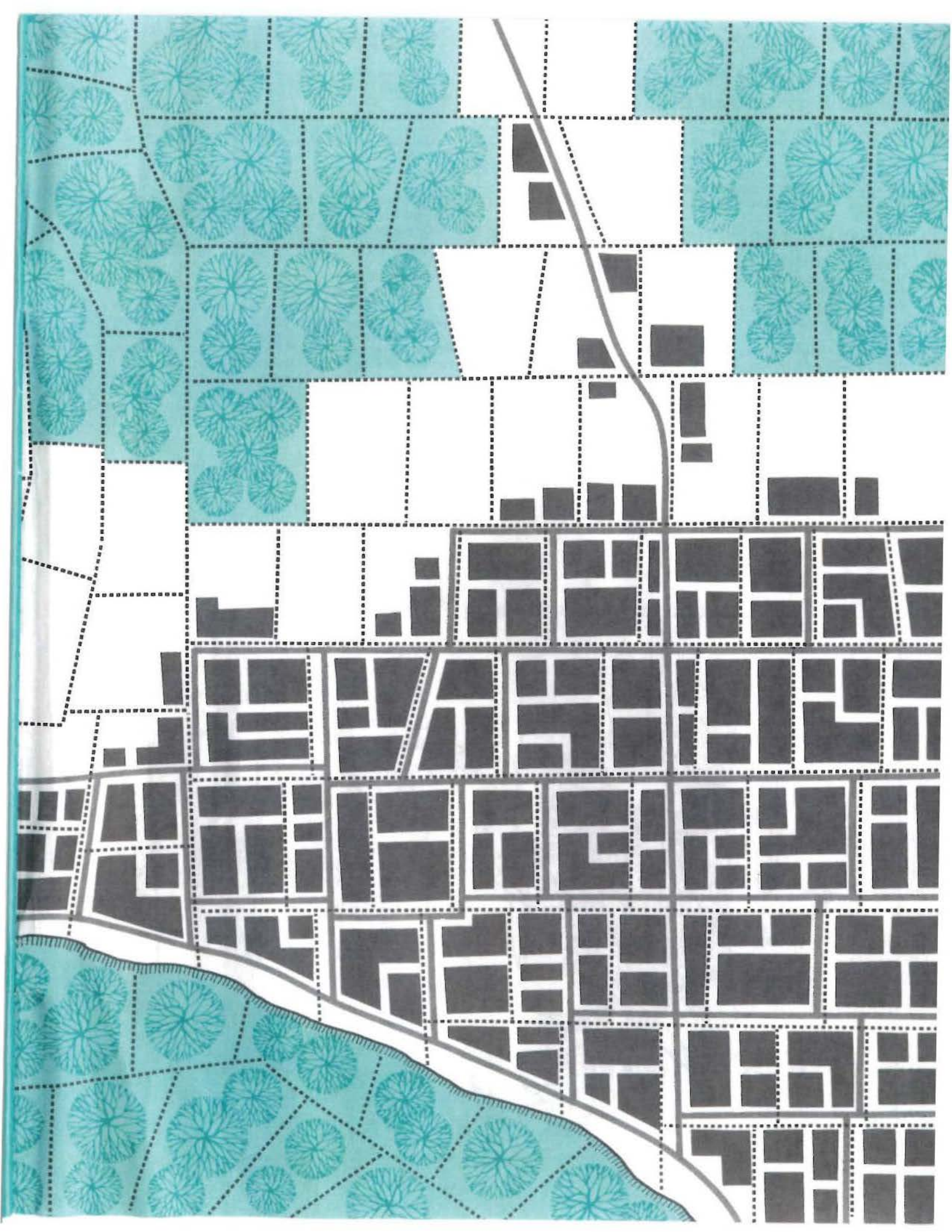

Game Fair Update

Special Services and Events for Members

The RPGA™ Network will offer members 38 tournaments and a dozen Seminars at the GEN CON® 24 Game Fair next month. To help you get the the most out of your Network/Game Fair experience, however, we'd like to tell you about the following:

New Locations for Network Activities

Our convention Headquarters, Members Lounge and all Tournaments have moved to larger quarters this year. The Mecca Arena is the Network's new Game Fair home. To reach the Arena, just cross the skywalk and turn right at the other side.

The traditional Members' Meeting will he held at 7:00 p.m. , Wednesday, August 7th in the Hyatt's Grand Ballroom.-- right at the top of the escalators leading up from the hotel lobby. Highlights include the annual Games Decathlon skit competition.

The annual Network Breakfast and Gamers' Choice™ Award Ceremony will be held at 8:00 a.m. Friday, August 9th right on the convention site.

And don't forget: The Network's annual awards ceremony for tournament winners will be held at 2:00 p.m. , Sunday, August 11th at the stage in Mecca's Great Hall -- right next to the Art Show and Exhibit area.

Express Service

Once again, Network members can pick up the pre-registration materials or register for the convention at our own registration counter, located in the convention registration area in the MECCA lobby. You also can purchase Network memberships and Game Fair generic tickets at this counter, which will operate from convention opening to 1:00 p.m. Thursday, August 8th, and from convention opening to noon on Friday and Saturday August 9th and 10th.